



Herbert Allen Brown

January 10, 1940 - May 28, 2022

Herbert (Herb) Allen Brown, age 82, passed away on Saturday, May 28, 2022 in Bellingham WA after a 5 1/2 year battle with advanced prostate cancer. He was a graduate of UCLA and then went on to get his PhD in Zoology at University of California, Riverside. He joined the biology faculty at Western Washington University in Bellingham in 1967. Over the years he taught classes in Vertebrate Anatomy, Ornithology, Embryology, Evolution, Animals and Plants of the NW, and more. He was on the Sehome Arboretum Board for several years during this time, and he was involved in the Washington Native Plant Society. He retired in 2006 as an emeritus professor, but he continued his research work. He was grateful for the opportunity to teach at WWU and to raise our family here in Bellingham and retire here.

Herb loved to share his passion and knowledge about the natural world. He spent many years studying the life cycle of the Tailed Frog (*Ascaphus truei*) and the Western Fence Lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis*). He enthusiastically shared the many fascinating facts he had discovered with others at scientific meetings, students in lectures, seminars, as a guest speaker, and with doctors and other health care professionals, neighbors and friends...really anyone who showed an interest and there was never enough time to include all the interesting facts! Herb contributed to two books, *Amphibians of Washington and Oregon* and also *Reptiles of Washington and Oregon*, both were published by the Seattle Audubon Society.

Herb met Marion at UCR in the Biology department where they realized they were meant for each other. They had 57 wonderful years together which included many adventures looking for frogs and lizards and exploring the biological and geological wonders of the western United States. Camping in everything from a pup tent to a trailer, Herb and Marion shared their love of biology and the outdoors with their children who grew up appreciating its diversity, awesomeness, and becoming naturalists themselves.

He also supported our children in their interest in various sports, with everything from playing catch to shooting baskets and spending many many hours on bleachers at their sporting events. He helped them excel in so many ways and become the awesome people they are today.

Herb loved the dogs that we had over the years. They added so much to his life, and he so enjoyed taking them on hikes with him. Hyla was our first family dog and next was Lad and then Ernie. They were all great dogs! Our kitties, SuzieQ and Dudley Do-Right, were our great entertainment and companions in the last few years.

Herb loved hiking in the North Cascades, often taking our dog with him. Whether alone or with others, he noticed everything from the minute flowers to the big encompassing views. The North Cascades are a photographer's dream! Herb loved photography and took many pictures to document his hikes and travels. Of course there are also the thousands of pictures of our children, pets and flowers. He was delighted to finally find and photograph the Phantom Orchid on Sehome Hill. Herb felt very lucky since it sometimes goes into remission for 17 years after blooming. Herb had a good eye for composition and was a wonderful photographer!

Herb loved old movies. His favorite was The Treasure of the Sierra Madre with

Humphrey Bogart. He also enjoyed old cowboy movies and always noticed and appreciated the unique areas where they were filmed.

During the 54 years that we have lived in our home he converted our bare dirt yard to a place of beauty and serenity with lots of trees, rhododendrons, ferns and more. Digging a hole to plant something was a difficult task because of so many rocks within the soil, so the yard is a monument to Herb's hard work, his eye for beauty, and his planning for the future. He relished his time watering the garden and reading one of his mysteries while relaxing in it. Watching the birds, squirrels, bunnies and deer that sometimes pass through was a favorite pastime too.

Herb's quiet nature was overcome by his love of the natural world and his enthusiastic willingness to share its wonders with others. He was a wonderful loving husband and father, and he will be greatly missed!

He was preceded in death by our son, Steven, and his parents, Stella and Herbert Elwood Brown. He is survived by his wife, Marion, his daughters Sue Brown (Lisa Bedortha) and Jennifer Brown Houston, his grandchildren, Cody and Kaitlyn Houston, and his sister, Helen Christine Spring.

As he requested, there will be no memorial service. If so inclined, please make a donation to your favorite charity in his memory.

Tribute Wall

PP

“ I’m sure Herb didn’t remember me, but he made a huge impression that I’ve treasured for 30 years. I took his classes in ornithology, zoology, and evolution at Western, and his North Cascades Institute class on NW amphibians. His enthusiasm was infectious and helped me finally choose a major. I can honestly say that I would be a completely different person had I never met him. Thank you Dr. Brown for every thing you did for this world.

Perry Parsons - June 29, 2022 at 12:00 AM

MB

“ I took classes from Herb at WWU during the late 70’s and 80’s. He was one of my favorite teachers. He exuded life and enthusiasm. I have a vivid memory of his explanation of the journey of sperm to egg. He gesticulated rather wildly with his hand held chalk, bits flying off the board as he drew and demonstrated the science, all the while talking excitedly and looking back at us frequently to make sure we were paying attention. Well ,of course we were! He gave us a great show. His passion for biology was a spark for mine. Thank you, Herb. My condolences to your family in this time of loss.
Michelle Ballou

Michelle Ballou - June 27, 2022 at 12:00 AM

BG

“*Herb was a giving person who readily shared his knowledge of amphibians and reptiles with others on his own time, separate from his teaching and research duties at WWU. I remember a weekend field trip in the late 1980’s, that he conducted with a group of us biologists in the Stimpson Reserve, along the Lake Louise Road. He shared his extensive knowledge of salamanders along wetlands located there.*

He also lamented the population decline of the Western Toad in the Heather Meadows area near the Mt. Baker Ski Area during his studies. His interest in the Tailed Frog is very fitting since it is a very unique frog with a fascinating ecology and life cycle, living exclusively in fast moving, steep, cold water streams. I wish that I had the opportunity to be a student at WWU and study under Herb.

Brady Green - June 26, 2022 at 12:00 AM