



Ira John Uhrig

May 16, 1957 - May 21, 2018

Ira John Uhrig, Superior Court Judge for Whatcom County, passed into the arms of His Savior on Monday, May 21, 2018 due to respiratory failure while fighting Non-Hodgkins' Lymphoma. A public service will be held at Greenacres on Friday, June 1st, at 12:00. He was 61 years old and is survived by his loving wife of 30 years, Kristin, and his five children, Jedidiah, Wyatt, Levi, Waylon and Nellie Rose. He is also survived by his brother Skip, his Uncle Ira Yeager, Jr., his Aunt Sally Yeager, and his Aunt Marion Boe.

He was born in Bellingham on May 16, 1957 to Frank and Marianne (Yeager) Uhrig, and graduated from Bellingham High School where he was inspired by his musical mentor and band director, Ralph Pauley. Ira earned his BA at Seattle Pacific University in American Studies, and his JD at the University of Washington School of Law in 1981. He practiced family law, and in 1986 declared his candidacy for 42nd District Representative. He lost that race to his friend, Pete Kremen. During the campaign circuit he got to know Judge Ross very well, and whenever a judge pro tempore was needed to fill in at District court, Ira was called up. By 1993 he was working full-time on the bench. Judge Rhea retired in 2000 and Ira won the election in a landslide against six opponents to fill his spot on the District Court bench. At the same time, he was appointed as a Federal Magistrate for US District Court for Western Washington, so Ira created the very first Federal night court in America and presided over it every Wednesday evening for 12 years. He went

on to win five more elections, including four for Superior Court, and ran unopposed in each. He continued to work full-time through eight years of chemotherapy.

Ira and his wife Kristin were married in 1989 in Bellingham. They homeschooled their five children, taking them on adventures in their motorhome to National parks, and historic landmarks. They also played worship music together at many churches, and served as deacons and teachers. Ira was the Pipe Major for the Bellingham Bagpipe Band and was well known for his Scottish Military History display at the Bellingham Highland Games at Hovander Park for 20 consecutive years. He played his pipes, clarinet, and saxophone at countless weddings, funerals, parades, graduations, and veterans events. Ira was an inventor of musical gadgets and held two patents. Ira owned Manna Music with his friend Jamie Fraser for 25 years, and was also the co-owner of Yeager's Sporting Goods, founded by his grandfather, Ira Yeager, in 1921. For many years Ira played country-western, dance hall music with The Lost Highway Band, under the nickname "Johnny Waco", with his friend, Ron Hardesty. His large American Flag guitar display to honor military veterans will be seen again at the Northwest Washington Fair this summer.

His legacy to the community, his wise judicial leadership, his musical prowess, his faith in Jesus, his disarming wit, and constant joy will be greatly missed by all who knew him..

Memorial contributions can be made to the Whatcom Crisis Pregnancy Center or the American Legion , Post 7.

A graveside service will take place on Friday, June 1, 2018 at 12:00pm at Greenacres Memorial Park (5700 NW Dr. Ferndale).

Tribute Wall

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“ It is indeed a great loss for all of us who had the privilege to know him as a person and as the very caring and just Judge he became. For myself, though we were never friends, but acquaintances since I had the joy of working in his court as a bilingual Spanish interpreter, since about 30 years ago. The memory of him coming to District Court office always with some crank that made everyone laugh, had the pleasure of hearing him play the bag pipes bringing good memories of my own father , who laid the bags pipes as well. Always a smile on his face, a sincere smile. He was also my neighbor when he bought the Costellos house on Cornwall and I delighted in seeing him put up different flags from different countries holidays, that was a treat. New his lovely wife and children when ever we run into each other somewhere. Getting a kick of his charming cloths he liked to wear , What can I say of the man, but only the very best any person should want to be remembered as . HE WAS A GOOD MAN. To his loved ones I send my most sincere condolrnses. I shall miss him even if I am now retired.

Nettie Cameron Clouthier - May 21, 2018 at 12:00 AM

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“ I knew Ira through my husband, Ray Downey, who also lost his life to cancer when he was 61. They shared the love of music and musical instruments. Ira officiated the marriage of my daughter and her husband and played bagpipes for Ray's burial. I will always be grateful for the contact I had with Ira when he returned a saxophone to me that was bought and sold under false pretenses by another person. Ira was truly a man of honor and courage. He will be missed by many but not forgotten. I'm so sorry his family is having to go through his loss.

Diana Murphy - May 21, 2018 at 12:00 AM