



## James Jim C. Stephens

May 20, 1928 - December 29, 2018

James Stephens, Jim as he preferred to be called, was born on May 20, 1928 in Cantrell, OR and passed away at his home on December 29, 2018, at the age of 90. His parents, Freeman and Hattie Stephens moved to Bellingham in 1937. Jim went to Bellingham High School and started working at an early age. Jim had two older sisters, Margaret and Kathy, as well as two younger brothers, Freeman and Douglas, all of whom have passed.

In 1948, Jim married his high school sweetheart, La Verne, and they recently celebrated their 70th anniversary. They had four children, Patrick, Jane, Martha, and Mary Lou.

Jim loved the outdoors and took his family and friends on countless excursions showing the beauty of the ocean, lakes, forests, and mountains in both Washington and Canada. He enjoyed teaching them to enjoy wildlife and the outdoors. He would stop on a wilderness trail and show the children obscure details of life on a forest floor or a tidal pool. He never missed an opportunity to teach. Sometimes, he would stop on the trail and tell those who followed, "Always stop and turn around and look at where you have come from, that way you will know you are on the right trail home." Anyone who knew Jim understood that this was more than wood wisdom, but a philosophy on how he lived his life.

Jim loved the history of Whatcom County and would share knowledge of early mining, farming, and logging to anyone who was interested. He was an avid reader, with great ability to retain information, and his stories were very entertaining.

In summer months, it was common to see Jim working his small farm with a straw hat and a piece of grass between his teeth. He took great joy on the family farm and in naming his small herd of cattle names that we thought were very funny.

Jim loved to travel to Canada with his family. He showed them the beauty that Canada had to offer, and fishing was often one of the excuses.

Jim was an entrepreneur and earning a living came easy to him. At the end of a long and successful career in business, Jim “retired” to sell real estate. His dream came true when he subdivided his small farm into lots, building the road himself and naming it for family, “Stephens Drive”. He sold his favorite lot to his niece, Donna Lea, who both Jim and La Verne and family referred to as their “elder daughter/sister”.

Jim had a sense of humor that was special to anyone who knew him. Even in failing health, he kept his sense of humor and never complained. As his life was ending, he took Mary Lou’s hand and whispered, “Lou, take the hearing aids out, I don’t need them anymore.”

Jim is survived by his wife, La Verne; children, Patrick, Jane (Jack) Smith, Martha (Terry) Waschke, and Mary Lou; ten grandchildren; and fifteen great-grandchildren. He will be sorely missed.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, Jan. 19th, 2019 at 1:00PM at Moles Farewell Tributes Greenacres (5700 NW Dr. Ferndale).

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations are made to Whatcom Hospice.