



## Joseph David Coons

January 1, 1935 - February 21, 2019

Joe Coons died suddenly Thursday, February 21, 2019, doing what he loved to do, working on boats. He was born January 1, 1935, in New York City, the son of Sheldon and Elizabeth Coons. He lived in New York City until he graduated from Union College, Schenectady, NY, with a degree in economics.

Following graduation he married Judy Van Heusen of Scotia, NY. They moved to Connecticut where he was employed by Proctor & Gamble and then Southern New England Telephone. In 1961 he purchased radio stations WOHI and WOHI-FM in East Liverpool, OH. He established a consulting business and began doing joint ventures with IGM Inc. of Bellingham, ultimately merging with them and moving his family to Bellingham.

Shortly thereafter he established a new company, Paperwork Systems Inc., selling to worldwide radio stations. In 1978 he sold PSI to Control Data Corp. and relocated to New Canaan, CT for three years as president of the new Control Data Division. Upon completion of his Control Data contract, the family returned to Bellingham for good.

He created JCA Systems which developed software, was a broker with Bellingham Yacht Sales, and started his own yacht charter company Skylark Charters, which he sold in 1999. He continued training and consulting for various Bellingham area charter companies and boat owners, including

Northwest Explorations, while writing and publishing operating manuals for numerous charter yachts.

Joe was involved in numerous community organizations including the Rotary Club of Bellingham, serving as president for the 2003-2004 year. He was a past member of the St. Joseph Hospital Advisory Board and a founder of Station KZAZ-FM. He was a past vestryman and treasurer of both St. Paul's Church in Bellingham and St. Stephen's Church in East Liverpool. He was a founder of the Citizen's Scholarship Foundation of the Tri State Area serving seven school districts in Ohio, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania, which has given away over \$9 million in scholarships to date, and was president of the Ohio State Dollars for Scholars organization. While in Ohio he was given an Annual Distinguished Citizen Award by his city's JayCees.

Joe served as a board member of the Whatcom Family Y, the Bellingham Festival of Music, and several other organizations. An active instrument-rated pilot, he served a term as president of the Washington Pilots' Association and its local chapter, which presented him with their Pilot of the Year award.

His primary hobbies were writing and boating. He was a past Commodore of the Bellingham Yacht Club and wrote a booklet on boat operation as well as a regular boating safety column and the Yacht Club's newsletter. In recent years he was devoted to participation in a memoir-writing group who became dear friends. He loved good stories!

Joe is survived by his wife Judy, daughter Catherine Coons of Arizona, and son David (Angus) Coons of Bellingham. The family requests memorials be directed to the Whatcom Community Foundation, 1500 Cornwall Ave., Bellingham, WA 98225, for equal distribution to the Bellingham Technical College and Whatcom Community College Scholarship Funds. A gathering of friends to celebrate Joe's life will be held Monday, March 4, from 4 to 6 in the

Marina Room at the Bellingham Yacht Club.

# Tribute Wall

PM

“ Joe was one of my favorite persons. He was smart, kind, and gracious! Joes community dedication and service were inspiring. He truly cared and always made a difference! My condolences to Judy and his family. I know his loss will be sorely felt.

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**Patricia Mckeown** - February 21, 2019 at 12:00 AM

JH

“ Dear Judy, Accept my sympathy for your loss. I offer my prayers for Joe, you and family. John Harriman

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**John F. Harriman** - February 21, 2019 at 12:00 AM

AC

“ Joe was an amazing man and all who knew him will miss him including me. I'll be thinking of you both during the service. I'm not able to come as I'll be in the air traveling that day. Sending love and support.

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**Ann Chaikin** - February 21, 2019 at 12:00 AM

DN

“ *The Bellingham Festival of Music has lost a loyal and devoted supporter of the Festival. Joe loved music and never missed a concert with Judy by his side. He was a generous advocate and Board member— attending all the BFOM Galas donating auction items, featuring boating excursions on Bellingham Bay – complete with fine wine and gourmet meals to enjoy. He even helped arrange the 2008 BFOM Chamber Music Concert and Buffet at the Yacht Club.*

*Joe was a fun story teller and engaged our donors and supporters at BFOM welcoming picnics and various fundraising events. He and his wife Judy opened up their home for many years to visiting musicians and made sure they were oriented well to our beautiful community*

*Joe served on the Board of Directors from 2000-2001. Throughout the history of the Festival, Joe and Judy have always been ready to help and have supported the Festival generously. Joe’s appreciation of the Festival and his stalwart support will be greatly missed.*

*My last phone call on behalf of the Festival was about our upcoming Fundraiser. I asked if we could borrow his windows based computer. “Oh Sure, “he said. “It’s fast, but old but should work great.” Joe had his accident later that day.*

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**diane norman** - February 21, 2019 at 12:00 AM

JS

“ *Dear Judy, sure hope we can come by for a little reading writing with you. I am so sad to lose Joe and I will think of you often. He was so fine, and I love you, too.*

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**jaye stover** - February 21, 2019 at 12:00 AM