



Melvin Warren Hollinger

June 11, 1916 - September 25, 2015

Melvin W. Hollinger

September 25, 2015 we lost a legend.

A man of many professions, passions, and great accomplishments – boxer, teacher, real estate developer, Rotarian, photographer, and gardener...but above all, he will be remembered as the greatest father, brother, grandfather, and friend any of us could have asked for.

Very few men have made an impact like the one Mel Hollinger has made on the world, his community, and his family.

He never told us how to live, he showed us.

His life and actions inspired. His wisdom turned the tides. His love was deep and unconditional. His faith and guidance have been a beacon for generations. And his razor sharp wit will keep us all smiling for the next 100 years.

Melvin Hollinger was born, June 11th 1916, in Rupert, Idaho to Warren and Agnes Hollinger. He grew up knowing the value of hard work – tending the farm with his brothers and sisters. He told stories of ice skating to school in

the winters, and showing his champion dairy cows in the summers.

As a young college student, Mel's summers were spent working for the cannery in Dayton Washington, where he met the love of his life, Wilma Lucille Winnett.

The two were married in 1938 and he graduated shortly after with a teacher's degree in Agriculture from the University of Idaho. While never the star athlete, there was one exception. Melvin was a decorated boxer and carried his appreciation for the sport throughout his life.

Mel and Wilma came to Blaine in 1939 to make their home and raise their family. There he began his first profession as a teacher for the Blaine school district.

Mel remained an educator for 17 years, while taking on additional jobs at Alaska Packers, and beginning his work as an inventor and carpenter.

In the 1940s, the war meant a ban on new metal toys and machines and Mel the inventor was born. Always seeing an opportunity, Mel opened a woodworking, welding, and manufacturing shop where he built and repaired bicycles, toys, and machines from found and recycled scraps to support his growing family.

He was always a goal setter, and carried an innate desire to rise to the top.

Mel embarked on his next profession in 1957, when he left his teaching tenure to pursue his real estate career as a broker and developer full time. Mel Hollinger Realty quickly became a recognized name throughout Whatcom County.

Mel and Wilma were builders of Blaine. Through their unselfish devotion and dedication they left Blaine and Whatcom County a better place for generations to come. Mel was a charter member of Whatcom North Rotary, District Governor, and Paul Harris Fellow. In addition to his local work, Mel's foundations provided medical relief, vaccinations, and micro-lending opportunities for communities in need across the globe.

As a historian, Rotarian, and world traveler, Mel's curiosity and philanthropy took him around the world. In his final days, Mel remarked, "I always wanted to see the world. And I did."

A self-professed eternal student, Mel was always eager to learn more and cultivate his many interests. His passion for photography, gardening, and technology took him into his 99th year.

But without a doubt, Mel's proudest accomplishment yet, is the family he built and the love he shared. Mel and Wilma were devoted parents who raised six daughters: Ardene, Clarene, Fontene, Shirlene, Marlene, and Darlene.

Mel was the ultimate patriarch. He watched his family grow from 6 Daughters, to 14 grandchildren, to 19 great grandchildren, to 10 great-great grandchildren.

Legends never die. They live on in all of us.

Melvin Hollinger's Family includes – siblings: Lois Metch, Shirley Wasco, Harvey Hollinger deceased; daughters: Ardene Bergan Thompson deceased, Clarene Day (Jim), Fontene Donahue (Dick), Shirlene Thibault (Denny), Marlene Anderson, Darlene Vyzis (Vassily deceased); grandchildren: Melvin Fitzgerald (Julie), Stefani Giammanco (Vince), Jim Fitzgerald (Laura), Gary

Bergan (Leshell), Eric Day (Linda), Todd Thibault, Bryan Fitzgerald, Karri Donahue, Stacey Vogel, Tami Wettman (Greg), David Anderson, Shawn Pappert, Demetry Vyzis, Mia Vyzis; 19 great grandchildren; 10 great-great grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews.

VIEWING: Tuesday, September 29th 3pm – 7pm & Wednesday, September 30th 11am – 1pm

FUNERAL SERVICE: Wednesday, September 30th 1:00 pm (to be followed by graveside service and reception)

Moles Greenacres Memorial Park

5700 Northwest Drive

Ferndale, WA 98248

Memorial Donations may be made in memory of Melvin Hollinger to Pavillion Project at Blaine Boys and Girls Club and Senior Center.

Tribute Wall



“ ... [Trackback]
[...] Read More here: molesfarewelltributes.com/obituaries/melvin-warren-hollinger/ [...]

September 23, 2020 at 12:00 AM



“ Hi I am Gretchen Hollinger daughter of Jon Hollinger and granddaughter of Harvey and Ilene” popo and Gramie. I’m not sure if I met anyone at family reunions, I was very young, but I would like be to get to know more about the Hollinger’s.
I live in Arlington Wa here is my phone # 425 343-5449
Address, 3015 185thPI PI NE Arlington Wa 98223

Gretchen Hollinger - September 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM



“ Mel, needless to say, was a remarkable person. He lived a “good life”, however you want to look at it, be it religiously or secularly. In a lot of ways he was a mentor to us younger guys who had the good fortune to know, work and associate with him. To me Mel and Wilma through hard work and kindness to others less fortunate, exemplified the “American Dream”; and yet always with Mel wonderful sense of humor. Mel leaves us all with a “hard act to follow”. LETS DO IT!
My very best to you and the rest of the Hollinger Family,
Jake and Gayle Smith

Jacob & Gayle Smith - September 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM