



Merlin Lester "Burt" Ecker

September 1, 1944 - August 6, 2023

Merlin Lester (Burt) Ecker passed away peacefully on Sun, August 6, 2023 in Bellingham after a brief illness. He was born September 1, 1944 to Merlin and Una (Townsend) Ecker, their first son and the first brother of older sisters Myrna, Lane, and Bethany. While in high school, the family (which, by then, included younger brother, Dick) moved to Lummi Island where he met Sharon Hoffman, who would later become his wife.

After serving in the Army and working for his uncle Art Nordvedt at Uniflta, he and Mom settled into married life, raising two daughters, and serving the City of Bellingham for 40 years, first as a Surveyor and later in Public Works as a Permit Reviewer.

Dad was a man of few words, generous with his time and, when you least expected it but needed him the most, he always showed up. He preferred simple over glitz and glam – button-up shirts (usually plaid) and jeans were about as fancy as he got. Traveling to far-off places wasn't in the cards either. Family vacations were road trips, mostly with our trusty camping trailer to stay at a favorite state park. Mom navigated and kept Dad supplied with Diet Coke and his "Wake-'em-up pills" (ie. plain M&Ms). Most often, though, he was happiest spending time at home, working in the yard, watching us kids play... and possibly pulling a prank or two on someone and telling bad Dad jokes.

Soon after he retired, he and Mom got promoted to grandparents. When his granddaughter arrived, he didn't want to hold her, afraid he might break her. As she grew, she had Papa wrapped around her little finger. He taught her how to give high fives, would set her on his lap and showed her how to steer his riding lawn mower in figure 8s in the back yard and had a secret greeting for her – from a distance, he'd give two clucks with his tongue, which always had her squealing, "Papaaaaa!!!" We're also fairly certain Zoey will be carrying on his legacy as the prankster of the family.

Dad is survived by his wife of 57 years, Sharon; daughters Diane Ecker and Jennifer Morford, son-in-law Alan Morford and granddaughter Zoey; sisters Myrna Frisbee and Bethany Goodman, and brother Dick Ecker; 13 nieces and nephews; many folks he met while working with the City and amazing friends in his neighborhood. He is preceded in death by his parents, Merlin and Una; sister Lane Parker; brothers-in-law Larry Parker, Jack Frisbee, Don Goodman, and Gene Hoffman; and sister-in-law Leanne Hoffman.

Dad requested a private graveside service be held for family only, which will be honored. However, he said nothing about doing an open house! Relatives, friends, and colleagues are invited to a Celebration of Life gathering at 2600 N Harbor Loop Dr in Bellingham (Squalicum Boat House at Zuanich Park) on Fri, September 15 from 1:30p to 4:00p. Come share stories, see photos, have some laughs, shed a few tears, and maybe pick up a pack or two of M&Ms.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that you consider a donation to your local food bank or a charity of your choice in Dad's name.

Tribute Wall

KE

“ I had the privilege to work with Burt in PW/Engineering. It was a huge loss when he retired. A quiet man, but was always the first one to jump up and help at the front counter and I don't think I ever saw Burt without his daily dose of M&M's. He was such a kind man. So sorry for your loss! Thinking of your family.

Kelly - September 12, 2023 at 12:00 AM

AC

“ Diane and Jennifer, I am so sorry for the loss of your beloved father. What a lovely tribute! I wish my time in Public Works had overlapped his, so we could've swapped stories. I am lifting you all in care and prayer as you mourn this wonderful man. I will gladly donate to the Food Bank in his honor – and thank you for that opportunity! Take care, dear ones.

Amy Cloud - August 31, 2023 at 12:00 AM