



Richard Arlen Olson

June 1, 1931 - March 18, 2026

Richard Arlen Olson was born in Bellingham, Washington on June 1, 1931 to Ralph and Annie Olson. When he was eleven, the family moved to a farm in Custer, Washington. He graduated from Ferndale High School in 1949.

In 1950, he worked dam construction in Oregon. In 1951, he enlisted in the Air Force and was deployed to the Arctic, serving on a base north of Fairbanks supporting the Distant Early Warning (DEW) line. After his honorable discharge in 1954, he returned to Bellingham, where he met his wife, Marianne Reynolds. They wed May 13, 1956 and went on to raise four children.

Richard held various jobs over his life (working for Friese Hide and Fur, KGMI/IGM, and as a school bus driver - which he greatly enjoyed), but in his heart he was a farmer. His main 'farming' endeavor was raising springer Holstein heifers, working with many local dairies. He always worked hard but did his best to be

there for his family, taking them on numerous trips (Yellowstone, Disneyland), as well as hiking and camping trips in the summer. He was not a man of many words with his family but he was very proud of his children and grandchildren

and was always happy to talk to others about their accomplishments.

Richard loved the outdoors. He was nearly always outside, even into his nineties. (He famously used a chain saw at 91 to cut down a tree.) He had many hunting adventures, the most notable was an 'expedition' to Alaska in the early 1970's to hunt big game. He climbed many peaks in Washington among them Mt. Baker, Mt. Rainier and the Twin Sisters. He also took a trek in Nepal, supporting a group that went on to climb Makalu.

In his "retirement" years (a farmer never retires), he spent most days working outside at "Camp Olson", as their rural home would affectionately become known. He enjoyed being part of the community, volunteering at the Foothills Food Bank and becoming a regular 'fixture' at the Welcome Senior Center, especially at the pool table. He leaves behind many good friends

especially Bob & Wilna Baisden and Tom & Mary Olson. And, he and Marianne shared great adventures on their numerous trips to Europe, Asia and Africa.

Richard passed from this life to the next, peacefully, the room "filled with light, calm, and intention". He was at home in the house he and Marianne designed and helped to build. They went on to spend 35 wonderful years together enjoying the stunning views of the Twin Sisters and Nooksack River in Deming, Washington.

Richard is survived by his children and their spouses: Rick (Penny Olson) of Lynden, WA, and Arlane (Angelo Zopolos), Randy (Patti Mullin), and Andrea

(John Perini) all of Bellingham, WA; four grandchildren: Selena Burgess (Mike) of Bellingham, WA, Rachel Bouma (Mike) of Lynden, WA, AJ Zopolos (Nicole) of Scottsdale, AZ, and Ashley Zopolos (Chris Bierman) of Bellingham, WA; eight great-grandchildren: Jersey Jones, Kyndell Bouma, Jaxson and Lincoln Burgess, Crue Bouma, and Hayden, Morgan, and Brooks Zopolos; his brother-in-law Harry Gimber and nephew James (Liz) Gimber of Coronado, CA, nephew Stuart

Gimber of San Diego, and niece Julie Gimber (Harman Gilbert) of Reno, NV. He is also survived by his aunt Emily Olson of Mt. Vernon, WA; and cousins Karen (Alan) Drafs of Bellingham, WA, Larry (Francine) LaBree of Bellingham, WA, Judy (Al) Lawson of Redmond, WA, Judi (Dick) Prettyman of Hereford, AZ, Dennis Lind of Mt. Vernon, WA, Patsy Levaque of Mt. Vernon, WA, Sherry Olson of Naples, FL, Evelyne (Tom) Gohlke of Vancouver, WA, Jim (Carol) Olson of Palm Desert, CA, John Olson, Carl (Judy) Andreas, Jr. of Everson, WA, and Jacqueline Mae Andreas (George) Inama of Kirkland, WA. Along with his wife and parents, he was preceded in death by his sister-in-law, Maxine Reynolds Gimber of Coronado, CA.

Richard was also pre-deceased by cousins Terry LaBree, Betty Olson (Howard) Urie, Sandra Olson (Dennis) Murphy, Ronald Lind, Steve Olson, and Marlene Olson; uncles Arnold Julius aka Barney (Lucille) Olson, Verne Erik aka Ernie or Turney (Gladys) Olson, Theodore Rueben aka Ted (Gertie) Olson, Walter Alfred aka Walt (Emily) Olson, Evans Carl aka Ev (Lola) Olson, John Olson, and Carl Bernard (Nellie) Andreas Sr; and aunts Ruth Elizabeth Olson (Emilo)

LaBree, Ethel Olson (Ward) Lind, Esther Olson, Dorothy Florence Andreas (Jessee) Laman, and Olga May Birch (John) Swanson.

The family extends a special thanks to his wonderful caregivers Angela, Carol, Cindi and Tracy. And they will be forever grateful to his amazing neighbor Jim.

A funeral mass will be held on Thursday, April 9th at St. Peter's Catholic Church in Deming at 10:30am, followed by a reception at the church. Following the service, internment will take place at Greenacres Memorial Park. Flowers are welcome, or memorial gifts may be directed to Whatcom County Fire District 14 (notably stations #92 and #93), P.O. Box 482, Sumas, WA 98295. You are invited to share your condolences and memories online at www.molesfarewelltributes.com.

Cemetery Details

Greenacres Memorial Park

5700 Northwest Drive
Ferndale, WA 98248
(360) 384-3401

Previous Events

Funeral Mass

APR 9. 10:30 AM.

St. Peter'S Catholic Church

Graveside Committal

APR 9. 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (PT)

Greenacres Memorial Park
5700 Northwest Drive
Ferndale, WA 98248
(360) 384-3401