



Rolf Beckhusen

December 27, 1944 - February 5, 2022

Living a full life to age 77, Rolf Beckhusen was born December 27th, 1944 to German immigrants. Rolf was raised in Barryville, NY where his father, Rolf Sr., ran a restaurant and his mother, Gertrud, was a seamstress who enjoyed horse race betting. Rolf spoke only German when he started classes at Eldred Central School, which led to him getting on the wrong bus home often. One of Rolf's fondest memories from childhood included being at Woodstock in nearby Bethel, NY, road trips in his VW Beetle, and attending many baseball games in the 1950's at Ebbets Field, watching his beloved Brooklyn Dodgers.

Rolf attended Coe College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa studying history. He later attended the law school at the University of Cincinnati. In the Vietnam era, Rolf served as a scout dog trainer for the US Army, trained to sniff out land mines. Rolf's name came up several times in the draft list. Unbeknownst to him, Rolf's close friend growing up worked in the draft administration office. Rolf's friend would delete his name from the draft list every time it came up. Rolf found out about the deed years later, likely sparing him from an untimely fate. Rolf had another intervention of fate when he developed an unexplained skin condition of concentric circles after hitting his leg on a set of bleachers, making him ineligible for deployment to Vietnam.

Rolf was a proponent of equal rights and steadfast in his morals and beliefs in always doing the right thing. Rolf shook Martin Luther King Jr's hand on four

different occasions. After law school, he worked as a district attorney and was involved with VISTA working with Native American tribes in Spokane. Rolf later went on to work for the City of Bellingham before he started his private practice in 1979. Rolf was the type of lawyer who truly went out of his way to help the little guy. He went about this with amazing equanimity in situations where most would have lost their cool. Rolf often traded legal services for skilled labor for folks unable to afford payment, never wanting to turn anyone away.

Rolf was married soon after settling in Bellingham and started a family. Rolf raised his three children in the historic “Deming Inn”. He instilled the importance of education in his children, refusing to buy video or computer games unless they had educational value (his kids learned to appreciate this only after the fact). Rolf lovingly built playsets, swings, and helped install a basketball court for his kids. He would, rain or shine, take his children on a nightly walk then read to them before bed. Rolf was always generous, even though he would be quick to point out he wasn’t an attorney in the business of making money. He always put his family ahead of his work, seldom missing any of the kids’ sports games. Rolf considered his children his proudest accomplishment. His son Zac appreciated the opportunity to play sports year-round and credits his Dad’s involvement in sports as a significant contributor to not becoming a juvenile delinquent.

Rolf served on the Mt Baker School Board for years, and he coached his kids’ Mt Baker youth soccer teams for over a decade. Rolf’s patience, sense of humor and dedication to his children made him an incredible coach. In the winter, he would buy coats for disadvantaged kids in Deming and his family took in a homeless family for a year. Rolf loved animals and would feed the twenty-some stray cats roaming around Deming. Rolf made sure the strays were trapped and fixed. The veterinarians at Mountain Veterinary Hospital would joke about expanding and creating the “Beckhusen Wing.”

Rolf loved sports, especially baseball. When his three kids were all old enough to walk, the family's first big vacation included a stop at the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, NY. Rolf would trade legal services for Mariner's season tickets. As a result, he and his kids were utterly hooked on the Mariners in the Kingdome era of Edgar Martinez, Randy Johnson, and Ken Griffey Jr, creating some exciting sports memories. Rolf sponsored adult basketball and softball teams called the " Rolf's " for the better part of three decades. He was borderline crippled until having replacement hip surgery, but he loved spending time with his friends playing softball. Some of the best softball memories growing up were going to tournaments on Orcas Island while camping at Moran State Park.

Rolf renewed his passion for Ping-Pong during the pandemic. Rolf had a goal of being the best in his age category on a regional level before his blood cancer diagnosis. Rolf would always say how much he looked forward to playing Ping-Pong with his friends, one of his few social activities during Covid.

The family would like to thank the nurses at Peace Health St. Joseph Hospital who advocated for Rolf and ultimately convinced his doctor to give him his last blood transfusion. This was likely the only way we could spend our last Christmas holiday together.

Rolf is survived by his daughter Lisa (Beckhusen) Aspesi, sons Zachary Beckhusen and Joshua Beckhusen, along with his five grandchildren Madeline, Thomas, Carter, Cameron and Ryan. Rolf relished being "Opa" to his grandchildren and was quick to entertain them with his Donald Duck impression or have them listen to the ticking of his wrist watch.

The family is planning a private interment for February 22, 2022 at Bayview Cemetery. A public celebration of life will be planned in the next few months.

We will all miss Rolf for his sense of humor, generosity and kindness. In lieu of flowers, please invite a friend to Rolf's favorite watering hole, Cafe Akroteri, tell some great stories and raise a glass in his honor.

Tribute Wall

JW

“*Rolf Beckhusen obituary I saw the email about Rolf’s passing, and a feeling of loss overcame me. I had missed communicating with him for the last six months of his life as I was recovering from some cardiac problems at Kaiser Permanente on Ohau. Rolf was my best friend at Coe College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Our meeting at Coe was a chance but a fortunate one for me, and I hope for Rolf and the College. We were roommates for three years in Green Hall, and his kindness and generous help went a long way toward improving my college experience. I served as Student Council President for one year and in other student volunteer positions. Rolf was always willing to help when I needed a volunteer. Although we eventually lived on opposite sides of the county, Washington State for him and Virginia for me, we stayed in touch over the years by phone, email, and mail; his loss is one I will never forget. For many years, we shared our interest in helping animals; he specialized in cats and I in dogs. Beyond the usual group of college friends, our informal social group, the “Inn Crowd,” provided an occasional home away from home and a place where a few other men and women friends could gather without some of the restrictions prevalent in the 60s.*”

John M. Wilson - May 24, 2022 at 12:00 AM