



SCHALLER, Clemens A.

Clemens A. "Clem" Schaller, of Pullman, passed away from a heart attack on Thursday, April 10, 2014 at his Bishop Place residence in Pullman, News 5.

Clem was born December 15, 1920, in Brewster, WA, the son of Carl and Laura (Perkins) Schaller and grew up in Okanogan, WA where he attended Okanogan High School, graduating in the class of 1939. During his final year he did his "senior project", constructing a duplex apartment building from a lot. After graduation he spent a year working in a local grocery store to earn money for college.

In 1940, Clem first came to Pullman to attend WSU as an architecture student and was a member of the Theta Chi fraternity. While a student he was a house hop at a WSO society and, as a fourth generation Schaller drummer, led his nine piece band, the Clem Schaller Big Band, that played dance gigs throughout the Inland Northwest. Clem was also a WSU Cougar athlete as a sparring partner on the boxer's boxing team and a half-mile on the track team.

In 1944 Clem left school and joined the WWII effort, graduating from the Army Air Force Flight School in Reno, TX, Class 44-20 on April 15, 1944. He was then with the 729th squadron of the 452nd Bomb group, flying out of Debden, Essex, England in 1944 and 1945 as the High Squadron Leader in 31 combat missions over Germany, flying the "Flying Ship II" B-17 Flying Fortress. He also piloted various aircraft such as B-29's, B-36's, and C-47 Cargo/Para-Troopers. Being a squadron leader his plane was a prime target, and on one of his missions he was shot down over France, successfully belly-landing his B-17 in a field with no injuries. Though behind enemy lines, he and his crew safely returned to England thanks to assistance from the French Underground.

Toward the end of the war, while on leave, Clem met his sweetheart, Leone A. Knedtsch, who had just driven from Minnesota in her dad's first two-seat convertible Coupeaux with a single carburetor seat in back after graduating from college with a social studies degree. She was a new social worker in the Okanogan/Inland area, renting a room owned by a relative of Clem. It was thought that Clem was attracted to her car and she was attracted to Clem's uniform. They were married in Oyak on May 4, 1946. Clem remained on active duty with the U.S. Air Force through 1952, and during that time he and Leone had four sons (in order of birth: Jeffrey, the twins Jon Steven and Christopher, and Joseph, all within 2.5 years).

After the war and until military deactivation Clem continued performing assignments for the Air Force, including the Korean War in his last active mission on 11-3-1952, as part of Operation OY-FLY, a now misclassified scientific research mission. He co-piloted a B-29 Superfortress through the cloud of the first hydrogen bomb test at Eniwetok, Pacific Island, while based in Hawaii with his family. In his spare time Clem loved to go sailing.

Upon military deactivation Clem considered becoming an airline pilot, but decided to return to Pullman with the family in 1953 and finish college while living in the South Fairways. During school Clem also worked on some construction projects, including his own. He received his bachelor of arts degree in Architectural Engineering in 1956. At that time Clem considered moving the family to Oxnard, WA for his career as a private builder, but decided (to the benefit of many) to stay in Pullman and help satisfy the local need for housing, and built the family's first house on Upper Drive. Beginning with his return to Pullman, Clem also returned to drumming jazz with various local musicians over many years.

On December 15, 1968 Clem was transferred to the Retired Reserve, U.S. Air Force, and on December 15, 1980 Clem was retired from the U.S. Air Force as a Lieutenant Colonel with decorations that included the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal.

Through the years Clem built many Pullman apartment complexes, such as the Schaller (name has been changed, NE Stadium Way), the Carlsara (named after his parents), and the Normandy, and several houses in Evergreen Community, some in partnership with former Pullman developers Lee and Swell. He also built the Evergreen Community houses for his family. He was known for building high quality living structures, with many of his projects built virtually by himself, some of them with his sons as the crew. Clem was also active in the American Legion and Rotary Club.

After retiring from the wear and tear of construction in the mid 1970's Clem held several jobs in semi-retirement related to home building. He retired in 1975, and in 1980 Clem and Leone sold the family home in Evergreen Community and over time lived in a couple of houseboats on SW Grandview. During those retirement years they enjoyed snow-birding in Heron, CA, and were and golfers. In recent years they moved into Bishop Place.

Clem is survived by his wife of 68 years, Leone, 90, in Pullman, and four sons left in Pullman, Chris in Tacoma, Jon Steven in Yuma, AZ, Joe in Gallup, NM, and sister Beverly in Lodi, CA. His parents and two siblings preceded him in death.

Bereaver relief, equine care, band leader, band leader, self-employed builder, husband, father, Clem Schaller was genuine, independent, an individualist and a true leader.

A memorial service will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, May 21, 2014 in the chapel of Kimball Funeral Home. Vault interment with military honors will follow at the Pullman Cemetery. **FUNERAL HOME & CREMATORY OF PULLMAN** has been entrusted with funeral arrangements. Online condolences may be left for the family at www.kimballfh.com

Clemens A Schaller obituary

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