



George W. Colby

August 10, 1945 - October 9, 2014

"Napin x p'hla"

George Wynn Colby

8/10/1945-10/9/2014

George Colby was born to Lee and Mary Colby of Harrah Washington, where the family lived until 1953, when the family moved to Sunnyside Washington. It was there that George took an interest in both vocal music and drama. He also joined the Sunnyside Swim team, where he won many blue ribbons for himself and the team.

While attending Central Washington State College, George met and married Mary Jane Adams, who he first met in first grade back in Harrah. After college, both taught in White Swan, Washington .

George served his country in Viet Nam from 1968-1970. After returning home to White Swan, George decided to study law at Willamette University in Salem, Oregon. Upon Graduating in 1973, George returned to the yakima valley where he became the first public Defender for the Yakama Nation and then Yakama

Tribal Prosecutor. George also served as District Court Judge in Yakima County.

Eventually, he went into private law practice with the Adam Moore Law Firm in Yakima, Washington before eventually opening his own law practice in Toppenish in 2007 until the present. Additionally, he served as Public Defender for both Zillah and Toppenish in the lower Yakima Valley.

George has also served the Yakama Nation as Treaty Attorney for the Yakima Nation Tribal Council to the present.

He was deeply involved with fundraising for Heritage College and served for ten years as the chair person for the polo tournaments which were very successful in raising substantial money for the college.

Recently, his favorite pastime was his boat, which provided many happy hours on Rimrock Lake with friends and family. He is survived by his wife, Mary Jane

Adams, a sister, Mary Lee Colby and a close nephew, Cameron Hopkins, Jr., as well as countless relatives scattered around the State and country.

Traditional dressing services will begin at noon on Monday at Colonial Funeral Home, viewing and Chapel services will follow. Burial will be at Lower Valley Memorial Gardens, 7800 Van Belle Road in Sunnyside, at 11:00 Tuesday Morning.

Friends can send condolences at www.toppenishfunerals.com. Colonial Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

Tribute Wall



“ George W. Colby

October 05, 2023 at 11:22 AM



“ *What a fine, kind, thoughtful man. He made a deep impression on me--a callow Washington Senate staff attorney, doing my best to learn about matters that he knew so well. I learned much from him in 2012, the year the legislature passed--and Gov. Gregoire signed into law--the state act facilitating retrocession of state jurisdiction to the Yakama and other tribes. I am so grateful for his knowledge and wisdom.*

Sam Thompson

Sam Thompson - April 07, 2016 at 03:54 PM



“ *We just learned of George's passing. It has probably been more than 50 years since I (Bob) have had contact with George but we have been apprised of his many achievements from time to time. This is to send our condolences and blessings, especially to Mary Lee. - Bob and Bobbi Colby bob@webcolby.com*

Bob Colby - October 26, 2014 at 10:08 AM



“ *My condolence goes to the Colby family. I am Denise Rowe Campbell and I went to Harrah Grade School with George and Mary Jane and I am just so sorry to hear of the passing of George. He will be missed in the Valley and by all that knew him. Sincerely, Denise Campbell*

Denise Rowe Campbell - October 16, 2014 at 10:30 PM

SH

“*Mary Jane, I was so sorry to hear about Judge Colby's passing. I know what you are experiencing and my heart goes out to you. You and your family are in my thoughts and prayers.*

Hugs - Sandy Hyde

Sandy Hyde - October 15, 2014 at 08:50 PM

EL

“*Dearest Mary Jane, Mary Lee, and family, We have lost one of the icons of our family! He could tell a great story, always available to assist with legal questions, his advice was always the best, and his kind words always helped in all situations. As my mother's first cousin and a best friend to my dad, he will have a special place in my heart. I was forever proud to say that he was my relative, not an abundance of lawyers in a Native family. Everywhere across the state there were people whom spoke highly of George Wynn. He could even carry a tune and sang, along with Mary Jane, at John and I's wedding, which we just celebrated our 40th. I loved going over to have piano lessons, it was one of the best opportunities to visit! We will miss him dearly,
John & Emma Jane LaVallie and Family*



Emma Jane LaVallie - October 13, 2014 at 04:17 PM

BF

“ Dear Mary Jane, Mary Lee, and all the Colby extended family:

George was such a wonderful person.....so honorable and generous. It was such a blessing to have him in our lives as his friendship was quite special to all of us. We hope you will find peace in your precious memories and please know we send you our sincerest sympathies.

*Most truly,
Bill and JoRee Murphy
Tyce, Quinn, Grady, and Conor Murphy*

Bill and JoRee Murphy and family - October 13, 2014 at 12:45 PM

SB

“ Dear Mary Jane and family,



It has been my privilege to associate with George in different social circles.

As a former employee of the Yakima Nation, Heritage University, and resident of Toppenish. We shared many smiles and much laughter at fund raising events, especially at Dr. Plumb's and Freddie's.

I always felt George's persona was evidence of a man with a harmony in his life.

Mary Jane, you filled his heart with the most security, love, and joy possible in a marriage. In his professional life existed actions describing his commitment to human fairness, and equality driven by his tenacious work ethic

Our memory of George is equal to a man who has lived decades longer.

I hear his burst of laughter. I feel his firm sincere hand shake. I see his smiling face which speaks a greeting as if we had just spoken yesterday.

Of all the areas in a man's life worthy of judgment, I say to each of George's,

" My complete respect to you my valued friend."

Peace to you, George, and safety, health, and comfort to all your family.

*Respectfully,
Stephen T. Busby*

Stephen T. Busby - October 12, 2014 at 08:25 PM

KN

“ *Mary Jane I am truly sorry to hear about George's passing. I'm at a loss as to what to say. I will miss talking to him, he did such great things for the community. His heart was always in the right place.*

Kris (Walker) Nau - October 11, 2014 at 08:10 PM

KF

“ *I knew George as a fellow classmate from Sunnyside High School. The best memories are of his talents in school plays, his academic ability, his humor and friendliness among fellow classmates. It is sad to lose George so soon.*

Karen Essary Fischer, Saint Paul MN



Karen Fischer - October 11, 2014 at 06:05 PM

EB

“ *Dear Mary and Mary,
The Bickford branch of the family sends our love to you in this time of loss, and prayers of comfort for you from our Heavenly Father. Our family has lost one of it's great story tellers of family lore, we have so many wonderful memories of times spent together.
All our love,
Ellen and Richard, Bob and Family, and Steve and Family*

Ellen Bickford - October 11, 2014 at 03:43 PM

EF

“ *Ellen Bickford, Robert Bickford, Stephen Bickford, & Family purchased the Ringed by Love for the family of George W. Colby.*



Ellen Bickford, Robert Bickford, Stephen Bickford, & Family

- October 11, 2014 at 02:55 PM

CW

“ *We knew both George and Mary Jane from our years in Harrah at the Grace Brethren Church. We extend our deepest sympathy to Mary Jane and the family in their loss.*
Chuck and Marilyn Winter / Sunnyside

Charles H. Winter - October 11, 2014 at 10:50 AM