



Robert Bob Riggs

August 8, 1934 - February 27, 2014

Robert Bob Riggs, former Redmond High School Principal and Redmonds longest serving Mayor, passed away peacefully this month at the age of 79 and a half. Riggs was a fourth generation descendant of pioneering families who came across the Oregon Trail in covered wagons in 1847, and grew up in Salem. He was the youngest child of Earle and Verna Riggs, and grew up with brother Dave and sisters Lorna and Diane. He attended Salem High School, graduating in 1952, and went on to college at Seattle Pacific College. During his time at SPC, he sang in numerous choral groups, and also participated nationally in debate, placing at the 1956 national debate championships with his debate partner Jerome Kenagy. After graduation, he married Virginia Hansen, who preceded him in death in 2009. Riggs taught middle school and high school in the Shoreline Public School system before being selected as the administrator for foreign language programs for the entire district. In 1964, the Riggs took a sabbatical, and spent almost a year living in France and traveling throughout Europe. Riggs worked on a masters degree at the University of the Sorbonne, and traveled throughout Europe and even Northern Africa, including Morocco. His French language skills were so polished that many native French were convinced that he too must be a Frenchman. On their return to the U.S., Bob and Virginia started their family with Doug (in 1965) and Stephanie (1967). He completed his PhD coursework at the University of Washington, and in 1971, the family moved to Redmond, where Bob accepted the position of Principal of the brand new Redmond High

School, and the family became enmeshed in the local community. He later served 18 months as interim Superintendent. Bob joined the choir of the Community Presbyterian Church (he would later serve many years as its director), served on the Church session, and volunteered with the Rotary Club. In 1977, then Mayor Sam Johnson appointed Riggs to the Redmond Sewer Committee, which was tasked with identifying a way to comply with a mandate to the City from the federal government to move away from septic systems or face millions of dollars in fines. Riggs led the Committee to an innovative and collaborative solution that got the system in place and on-time. Johnson appointed Riggs to the Redmond City Council in 1978, and he ascended to Council President in 1981. In 1982, Johnson died unexpectedly when on a trip on the East Coast, and Riggs was elevated to Mayor, a position he held for ten years. Riggs once said that he had enormous shoes to fill following the dynamic former state legislator Johnson, but they had a shared vision of a vibrant, well planned community with parks and schools and a strong economic base. Riggs led the effort to expand the airport, working with the City airport manager Carrie Novick and supporters to move the terminal from its former location at the far northern end to its current location, secure a tower from the FAA, build the new terminal and entice new air service to the region. The expansion of the airport led to the growth of air access from Central Oregon to the rest of the West which opened up the region to business and recreation. In the 1980s, the city identified the property around the airport as an industrial development zone, and mapped out areas for parks. Creation of the canyon park system in Redmond was one of Riggs major efforts, and not without controversy. Some wanted to use Canyon property for housing developments or retail areas. But he persisted, believing that Redmond needed a signature park and open space that could be enjoyed by families and children. Today, the Canyon is protected for generations to come. He also spent many years working to convince the state that Redmond needed a highway bi-pass to get large 18-wheel semi-trucks out of Redmonds downtown area. After more than 15 years, the bi-pass was finally completed,

and the downtown area is being revitalized and is becoming business and pedestrian friendly again. For more than 30 years, Riggs and business partner Paul Eggleston ran the Oregon Teaching Center, which developed advanced teaching materials used in classrooms throughout the country focusing on improving listening and retention skills for elementary and middle school students. The program, sold to school districts in 50 states, was the best-selling such program in the U.S. Riggs also started the Printing Post, initially to print the educational materials for the OTC, but then to offer printing services commercially. He also started and ran Roadrunner Courier, which operated for many years as a local delivery service for air freight and local packages. In 2011, Riggs married Gloria Staats, and the two traveled around the region and the West in their retirement, and staying connected with their church and community. In the past several months, as Riggs health took a turn, Gloria provided wonderful support and care. Known as Rob in his youth, Riggs was a renaissance man in many ways, extremely well read, fluent in French and Spanish, and able to get by in some German as well. He was also a bit of an adventurer, joining his children and nieces and nephews on numerous back country skiing and camping trips, white water river rafting and mountain climbing adventures led his older brother Dave and fellow family members. He attended hundreds (probably thousands) of Virginias orchestra and string quartet concerts over the years, and was always interested in discussing the latest political squabble occupying the news in Washington D.C. or Salem. He leaves behind a wonderful legacy and a life filled with warmth and joy and laughter and positive energy. He is survived by son Doug Riggs in Tigard, daughter and son in law Stephanie and Mike Parker in Redmond, wife Gloria, granddaughters Camille & Caroline Riggs and Brooke & Kristine Parker, step-children Teri Lynn (Richard) Williams in Knights Ferry CA, Chris (Karen) Staats in Salem, Sister Diane Vaucher in Salem, and several step grandchildren, great grandchildren & nieces and nephews. The family wishes to express their appreciation for the wonderful

care given by Dr. Nathan Thompson, his assistant T.J. and also to Ellen, Denice & Mark from Partners In Care. A service is planned at Redmonds Community Presbyterian Church for Sunday, April 6, at 3:00 p.m., 529 NW 19th Street, Redmond, Oregon 97756 Memorials can be given to Community Presbyterian Church, Partners in Care, or the Sam Johnson Park Improvement Project.

Funeral Home:

Redmond Memorial Chapel

717 SW 6th Street

Redmond, OR

US 97756

Tribute Wall

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“ Dear Aunt Gloria: I hadnt spoken to Uncle Milton Scheuerman for a long time, but several weeks ago on the telephone he told me your husband had passed and he had attended the services of this much-loved pillar of the community. I am so sorry to hear it. Please accept my belated sympathy. I am sure you blessed each others lives and wish you well in your bereavement. I tried to email you, but do not know if I have a proper email address anymore. Thanks so much for posting Bobs obituary online. It makes great reading and was a welcome find for a latecomer such as myself. Best wishes and love to you and yours for continued health and safety, Irene Miller Principe (daughter of Birney Scheuerman Principe)

Irene Miller Principe (daughter of Birney Scheuerman Miller) - April 03, 2017 at 12:00 AM