



Craig Charles Kosonen

Craig passed away peacefully from natural causes while surrounded by close family and friends on Thursday, October 1, 2015 at Kootenai Medical Center. Craig was born in Wallace, Idaho on October 5, 1936; the only child of Unto "Whitey" and Edith (Torkelson) Kosonen. He attended schools in Wallace, Spokane and Coeur d'Alene, where he graduated from High School in 1954 as student body president. Although he excelled in baseball, he decided to pursue music and went on to play the trumpet professionally. Craig attended North Idaho Junior College and continued at the University of Idaho; where he received a B.A. in Political Science in 1959 and on to receive his Law degree in 1961. He was a proud member of the Phi Gamma Delta (Fiji) fraternity and

treasured the lifelong friendships he made there. Craig started his private practice in Coeur d'Alene and was appointed as Justice of the Peace in 1966 until Idaho's court reform in 1971, when he was appointed as a District Court Magistrate and served for 15 years until he retired in 1986. He then spent the next four years in private practice until 1990, when he served as First District Court Judge from Shoshone County until he retired in 2001. Craig was known for his brilliant legal mind; combined with a sense of fairness and compassion for all persons who came into his courtroom. He authored landmark decisions, as a District Judge and while serving as a pro tem Idaho Supreme Court Justice. In 2000, he received the Distinguished Jurist Award from the Idaho Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers. Even after retirement he helped people in need of his legal representation. Craig loved to laugh with friends and family and his hilarious wit was known to all who knew him. He was a long-time member of the Gyros club in Wallace. He was a passionate man and knowledgeable on most subjects, and yet enjoyed learning from others. He was an avid hunter and amateur gunsmith; rarely missing an opening day with his longtime friends (which usually fell on his understanding wife's birthday, Oct. 10). He also enjoyed reading, home remodeling, poetry (wrote a few good limericks), politics, golf and working on cars with his son, Brian. He loved his dogs and spending time with them was a big part of his retirement days. In recent years he was able to vacation in Mexico and Hawaii with his wife and closest friends. Craig is survived by his loving wife of 38 years, Nancy, at home in Osburn; his son, Brian Kosonen of Osburn, ID; daughter, Tiffany (Peter) Erbland of Coeur d'Alene, ID; granddaughters Kayla (Matt) Womeldorff of Salt Lake City, UT and Lauren Leitzke of Moscow, ID and grandson, Mitchell Leitzke of Moscow, ID. He also leaves a twin daughter and son: Karen Ylitalo Gill and her children in Hillsboro, OR and Cameron Ylitalo and his children of Colorado Springs, CO. A funeral will be held at 11 am on Saturday, October 10 at St. Pius Catholic Church, 625 Haycraft , Coeur d'Alene.