



Obituary: Boise lawyer Ken Pursley's 'adventurous and meaningful' life

The founder of one of Idaho's largest law firms was a champion for the outdoors and relished fly-fishing in new

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Ken Pursley died doing something he loved. Pursley, 75, a founding partner of the Givens Pursley law firm in Downtown Boise, was on a fishing trip in Brazil when his boat overturned Wednesday in the upper reaches of one of the tributaries of the Amazon River. "Ken's death is a harsh, heartbreaking blow to all of us at Givens Pursley and to Ken and Elizabeth's many friends and family, to whom we extend our deepest sympathies and condolences," the law firm said Thursday in a statement. "Ken was a dear friend and valued mentor to many of us. His impact on our law firm and all of us individually is difficult to capture in words."

Pursley's not-so-ordinary life began in 1940 in Sandpoint. He attended Sandpoint High School and was recruited to a summer program at a college in California after his junior year, then stayed at the two-year Deep Springs College after that program — allowing him to start college, go on to Cornell University, graduate from law school at the University of Chicago and eventually become a licensed attorney without having officially completed high school. "Ken tried to rectify this oversight by appealing to Sandpoint High School, but was unsuccessful because he was one half-credit shy of the required course load," a biography

provided by Givens Pursley said. He moved to Boise in 1970, ran unsuccessfully for Congress as a Democrat in the 1976 election, and then co-founded the law firm in 1977. He retired from the firm, now one of Idaho's largest, in 2005. But Pursley's retirement from the legal profession didn't stop him from pursuing other interests. He started a real estate investment and development company with Boise developer Rick Clark — a company that invested in Hotel 43, Albertsons Marketplace, Eagle Health Plaza, the Mulvaney Medical Office Building and other high-profile properties. Pursley advocated for the outdoors, as a board member of the Nature Conservancy and a supporter of the Boise Greenbelt, the 2001 Foothills Initiative and Boise Youth Soccer. And finally, he entertained his passion for fishing and life on the water. He became part-owner of Idaho Angler, a fly-fishing outfitter shop on Vista Avenue just south of Overland Road in Boise. Shop co-owner Rick Williams called Pursley "smart as a whip." The retired attorney "never used his intelligence to beat anybody up, at all. He was a mentor to everyone," Williams told the Statesman. Williams, Pursley and their wives traveled together to the Seychelles and spent many days fly-fishing on a sailboat in the Indian Ocean. "There were a lot of superlatives about him," Williams said. "Very good fisherman. Not flashy at all. ... But at the end of the day, he'd have some of the biggest fish." On his fishing trips, Pursley seemed to find unique fish, just as he sought interesting new sights and experiences in his life, though he wasn't a thrill-seeker, Williams said. One of those experiences was an exotic fly-fishing trip to Patagonia with former Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin, who served under President Bill Clinton. With his wife, Betsy, and Clark and Clark's wife, Pursley once traveled more than 35,000 miles on a boat. The two couples ventured from Southeast Alaska to the coast of Maine, via the Panama Canal. "We will miss him terribly," Givens Pursley partners Ed Miller and Chris Beeson wrote Thursday. "We can only be consoled by the fact that Ken died doing one of the things he loved, fishing, but more importantly, leading an adventurous and meaningful life." Arrangements for Pursley's memorial services were still pending late Friday.



Patricia Bridge Urquhart

May 27, 1946 - September 18, 2015

Patricia "Pat" Urquhart passed away on September 18, 2015, after a brief but devastating battle with metastatic melanoma. A Northwest girl, she loved the sun, and despite the warnings, it was hard to keep her out of it.

She was a fifth-generation Oregonian, descended from the Tichenor family, settlers of Port Orford. Pat was the daughter of Robert and Anna Tichenor Bridge and grew up with her brother Chuck in Parkrose. She received a degree in philosophy at Portland State, while working as a waitress. She worked in criminal justice planning and as a circuit court law clerk to pay her way through Lewis & Clark night law school.

She met her husband John in 1975, and they soon realized they had briefly met 11 years earlier while protesting a neo-nazi rally at PSU, an occasion in which Pat deflated the front tire on the nazi's flatbed truck. She hated bullies of every description.

Pat and John were married in 1977 and were soon blessed with son John and daughter Anna. Pat and John practiced law together for three years in Portland before moving to Northern California in her husband's ill-conceived attempt to reopen an underground gold mine. Almost broke, they moved to Boise, where Pat was admitted to the Idaho Bar and began a criminal defense and civil rights practice.

Pat's representation of the Idaho Pawnbrokers Association triggered her "sparkle plenty" gene and led to a lifelong enjoyment of antique jewelry. Memorable moments of her Idaho law career included: suing the department of corrections for the wrongful death of an inmate resulting from medical malpractice; seeking the reversal in the US Supreme Court of a client's conviction of trading in eagle feathers; and battling with a New York law firm representing a CBS talk show in a federal libel and slander case.

In 1988, Pat and her family returned to the Portland area and moved into a log home on the Sandy River. She spent the next 17 years as a senior assistant attorney general with the Oregon Department of Justice specializing in employment and civil rights litigation. During her time with the DOJ, she had more civil jury trials—with more wins—than all but a few litigators in the state. Pat briefly tried retirement, but found it way too boring. She soon returned to work as counsel for a Eugene labor law firm representing police, firefighters, and public service unions. As part of her new job, she was required to go to the scenes of police shootings to provide advice and counsel to the involved officers. She did not find this a daunting task, but merely the culmination of almost 50 years of work in the criminal justice system.

She spent the last six years of her life seeking vindication for a firefighter wrongly accused of gross misconduct. Her work resulted in winning a one-million-dollar federal jury verdict that was set aside by the trial judge. A week prior to her death, she was actively pursuing review by the United States Supreme Court of the unfounded nullification of the jury's decision in favor of her client.

Pat loved to travel. This past spring, she toured Scotland, England, France, and the Netherlands, with John and her in-laws Kitty and Robin Goldston. She insisted on visiting all of the major historic sites, including walking the entire grounds of Urquhart Castle on Loch Ness while suffering from pneumonia. She was a stubborn woman, and no one could ever get her to slow down. She and her family traveled to many countries in Latin America, taking almost annual vacations to the Yucatán coast of Mexico. Her favorite locations in Mexico were the coral heads of Akumal Bay and the undeveloped and tranquil fishing village of Xcalak. She was fascinated by Mayan history, culture, and language. She would spend hours on the beach, in cafés, and bars talking with the locals to build a personal dictionary of Mayan words and phrases. Mayan for "thank you" is "um xil bo'otik," or "God thank you for your kindness."

She was a member of the World Affairs Council, and a member and past president of the Portland Committee on Foreign Relations. As a lifelong student of history and literature, she was drawn to the controversy around Shakespearean authorship. A 1989 PBS documentary led to her conviction that Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, was the creative genius behind the works of Shakespeare, rather than the grain merchant from Stratford. She was a proud member of the Shakespeare Oxford Society in which she met many intellectually stimulating friends.

Throughout her life, Pat attracted strange and unique characters of every persuasion: artists, musicians, academics, judges, off-the-wall lawyers, jewelers, antique dealers, and even a few Republicans. Her interest in other people was reciprocated because of her sincerity, her intelligence, and her wonderfully wicked and playful sense of humor.

Pat was an expert storyteller and she embraced the power of jokes, metaphor, and poetic turns of phrase. One of her favorite analogies, that she'd use whenever anyone found themselves staying in a situation that was equal parts good and bad, was of "the monkey fucking the skunk," in which the monkey, "knew he hadn't had enough, but it was more than he could stand."

At an early age, Pat became interested in comparative religion and was ultimately drawn spiritually to the basic tenants of Buddhism, particularly the belief in the interconnectedness of everything and everyone. Perhaps this explains why, in her last days, after awakening from a heavily sedated slumber, she told her daughter Anna that she "must not forget what it says on the last page of the book we've been reading together: Be kind to one another." She and Anna had not been reading together; but in her last days she must have been reviewing her life in the context of her family and her faith. Her family was extremely fortunate to be able to hold her in her passing. She will be so terribly missed.

Family and friends are invited to a remembrance gathering at the family home on **Saturday, October 3, 2015, after 2 p.m.** In lieu of flowers, give a loved one a hug and/or donate to Mercy Corps.