



Byron Jay Wernz

August 28, 1936 - September 30, 2023

Jay Wernz passed away quietly on September 30, 2023, at the age of 87. He is survived by his wife Debbie and his three children Michael Wernz (Michael Nestor), Spokane WA, Michelle Wood (Gary), Medical Lake WA, Gregory Wernz (Bobbi) Fairfield WA. Besides his three children, Jay is survived by four grandchildren Jacob Kagele, Levi Wernz (Chelsea), Salena Wernz, and Cassandra Hulse (Dylan), and three great-grandchildren Kennedy Wernz, Boyd Wernz, and Clayne Hulse.

Jay was preceded in death by his parents Bill and Mildred Wernz and a brother Jackie Wernz. He is survived by brothers Gerald (Farah) Wernz and Jim (Ralph Pellecchiio) Wernz, nephews Cort (Pratik Krishnan) Wernz, Connor (Caity) Wernz, and numerous cousins. His extended family includes Brandon Jeske, Lori Wilbanks (Jeff), and grandchildren Jack & Ella Wilbanks. In addition, are grandchildren Elizabeth Young, Brittany Whipple (Dillon) & Brandon Young with great-grandchildren Aurora, Gabriel, Kabenzie, Esther, Wyatt & Bentley.

Byron Jay Wernz was born to William Wernz and Mildred (Carter) Wernz on August 28, 1936.

He never cared for his first name, so he always went by his middle name Jay. The only time he was called Byron was during his time in the US Navy Reserves.

Jay grew up in Fairfield, played football for the Fairfield Beavers, and graduated from Fairfield High School in June 1954. Jay won a console stereo/radio by working his paper route prior to the golden age of television. In November of 1955, Jay was selected by the Presbyterian Youth of the Spokane Presbytery to be their leader and Moderator for the coming year. This included representing Spokane at the National Assembly in Illinois and visiting mission stations supported by the Presbyterian Church in Tennessee, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, and Albuquerque.

Jay married his high school sweetheart Darlene Reedy in February of 1957. In 1957 Bill Wernz purchased property at Bottle Bay on Lake Pend Oreille where Jay and his family enjoyed making many wonderful memories together. In June of 1958, Jay graduated from Whitworth College. After graduation, Jay went to work for Washinton Trust Bank in Spokane and attended Gonzaga University in the evenings. A son Michael Jay was born to the young couple in March of 1959 with daughter Michelle Kaye born in February of 1963 and son Gregory Leigh in July of 1966.

Jay enlisted in the US Army Air Core Reserves which ultimately led to him being transferred to the United States Navy Reserve. On October 15, 1962, Jay was honorably discharged from the United States Navy Reserve.

In 1961 Jay and his father purchased the controlling interest in the Bank of Latah from W.A. Wolf.

Jay went on to attend Pacific Coast Banking School and ultimately took over running the Bank of Latah while his Father Bill ran the Bank of Fairfield. Jay was President of both the Washington Bankers Association and the Western Independent Bankers Association. After the death of his Father in 1974, Jay took over the operations of both the Bank of Latah and the Bank of Fairfield. Jay expanded the Bank of Fairfield to include branches in Spangle, Rockford,

Rosalia, Colfax, Spokane Valley, and Downtown Spokane. The Bank of Latah was expanded to include branches in Tekoa, Oaxdale, Palouse, and Saint Maries. Jay was also an Insurance Agent owning the Latah Insurance Agency and the Fairfield-Waverly Insurance Agency. Both of which were purchased from his father.

Jay was very active in the Fairfield community, being an Elder of the Fairfield Presbyterian Church, a Member of the Fairfield Service Club and Fairfield Commercial Club, and a volunteer fireman for District 2. He also performed for many years at Flag Day with the Fairfield Players. Jay belonged to Waverly Masonic Lodge #231 and the El Katif Shriners in Spokane, WA.

In 1981 Jay along with Johnny Holling and Bill Scheiche constructed and operated the Harvester Restaurant in Spangle. Many festive evenings were spent at the Harvester by all.

Jay married the love of his life, Debbie McBride on August 28th, 1998, and they recently celebrated their 25th anniversary on Jay's 87 birthday enjoyed by the family. Jay and Deb enjoyed quiet evenings at home, traveling and spending time with their family and many friends.

The Wernz family homesteaded in the Palouse area in the early 1900s and Jay continued to be involved in farming until his death. He enjoyed weekly trips to Fairfield to check on the growing crops. The Wernz family farm continues to be operated to this day and is in its 5th generation of farmers.

A viewing will be available at Cheney Funeral Chapel, 1632 W. 1st Street, Cheney, WA 99004 from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm Wednesday, October 4th.

Following a private internment service at Mount Hope Cemetery, the family

invites you to a celebration honoring the life of Jay on Thursday, October 5th from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm at the Fairfield Community Center in Fairfield, WA. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in his name to Hospice of Spokane, 121 S. Arthur Street, Spokane, WA 99202.

Cemetery Details

Mount Hope Cemetery

Valley Chapel & Trails Roads
Fairfield, WA 99012

Previous Events

Viewing

OCT 4. 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM (PT)

Cheney Funeral Chapel
1632 W 1st St.
Cheney, WA 99004
(509) 235-2992
<https://www.cheneyfuneral.com/>

Celebration of Life

OCT 5. 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM (PT)

Fairfield Community Center
304 E. Main St.
Fairfield, WA 99012

Tribute Wall



“ 1 file added to the album Jay Wernz



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