



Claude Nichols

October 6, 1930 - November 5, 2023

Claude Nichols, a well-known professor of History at Eastern Washington University passed away on November 5, 2023, in Spokane, WA.

Claude Woodson Nichols Jr. (Nick) was born October 6, 1930, in Reno Nevada, the son of Augusta Curler and Claude Woodson Nichols Sr. and the grandson of early Nevada pioneers. Claude was an active youth, learning to hunt waterfowl and fly-fish with his "Pop" in the lakes, rivers, and streams of the area. He even learned to tie his own flies to save money, Nick's love of fishing lasted his lifetime.

While at the University of Nevada (the only one at that time) he met and fell in love with Marilyn Mills, a farm girl from Logandale, Nevada. Upon graduation, he transferred to the University of Oregon where he earned his Master's Degree in History in an astonishing two quarters and a summer session.

Having been commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the Army at the U of N he was called to active duty in 1953. On June 6, 1953, he married his true love in her hometown before honeymooning across the country to report in at Fort Benning, Georgia. His first permanent assignment was Fort Lewis Washington, where he was charged with teaching 100 soldiers to ski and survive amid a winter deployment to the interior of Alaska. He arrived home in time to greet his firstborn daughter Mary-Lynn.

Once the Korean "war" ended, Claude returned to the U of O, completed a Ph.D. in History, and found his first job teaching at a small college in South Dakota. He was recruited by Eastern Washington State College (now EWU) in 1961, where he taught for 35 years. He loved the contact with his students and met personally with all his seniors, even if he was not their "advisor". He was awarded two Fulbright grants, first a summer in Mexico and then a fall quarter in Egypt.

Claude volunteered many hours at EWU, serving as head finish judge for the track team and being on the scoring table for both women's and men's basketball. He took up running while at Eastern and participated in several community races in preparation of finishing a marathon during EXPO '74 in Spokane. When his knees began to give him trouble, he began riding his bike and pedaled across Washington, 100 miles at a time.

Family meant everything to "Nick" and family vacations often included fishing as well as wide travel and camping near historical sites. He was an excellent fisherman and provided many meals with his catches, causing some of his children to claim they have eaten enough fish for several lifetimes.

Nick became known as the fishing professor at EWU; it was rumored there was a second campus at the Grande Ronde River down in Asotin County. When he retired from the University his gift was a beautiful engraved fly-fishing rod which he loved to use.

Seven Children were born to Claude and Marilyn during their 70 years of marriage. He is preceded in death by his son, Ben (Jackie) Nichols of Clarkston Washington in May 2023. Nick is survived by his six children, MaryLynn Nichols of Cheney, Claude Nichols III (Janna) of Vancouver, Molly Matthews (John) of Lynnwood, Bob Nichols (Carlene) of Anacortes, Tom

Nichols (Andrea) of Lynden, and Genie Nichols of Yellowstone Nation Park. Claude is survived by 21 grandchildren and 23 great-grandchildren.

Claude will be buried in the Washington State Veterans Cemetery, Medical Lake, Washington on Thursday, November 16, 2023, at 1:00 pm. Visitors are to assemble at the Administration Building at 12:45 pm. A Celebration of Life Service will be held Friday, November 17, at 11:00 am at the Cheney Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Building at 2536 North 6th Street. In lieu of flowers, please make contributions to EWU History Department Scholarships.

Cemetery Details

Washington State Veterans Cemetery

21702 W Espanola Rd.
Medical Lake, WA 99022

Previous Events

Burial

NOV 16. 1:00 PM (PT)

Washington State Veterans Cemetery
21702 W Espanola Rd.
Medical Lake, WA 99022

Tribute Wall

JM

“ *My deepest condolences to you at the loss of your husband and father.* ”



Joan Mamanakis - November 13, 2023 at 12:51 PM