



David M. Daugharty

May 27, 1934 - June 12, 2025

David M. Daugharty, a man who embodied all aspects of humanist values and never lost his boundless curiosity, died on June 12, 2025, at his home in Cheney, Washington, surrounded by his beloved family. These words describe Dave's life, but for those who knew and loved him, he was all of this and so much more.

Dave was born May 27, 1934, to Murchison "Mike" Daugharty and Irene Lynge in Bonner General Hospital and raised in Clark Fork, Idaho, in what he described as the perfect time to come of age. Clark Fork began as a settlement tucked into the narrow valley between the Cabinet Mountains and adjacent to the Clark Fork River, which spills into Lake Pend Oreille, and provided a lifetime of fascination for Dave. It was here that his grandparents migrated to build a prosperous town. It was here that Dave learned that sorrow can be turned into resilience, and here where love and the contributions of the community greatly impacted his life.

He was born during the height of the Great Depression in an era requiring resilience as the country swung from economic despair in one decade to collective global war in the next. Like many young boys during those lean and challenging times, Dave was a collector. He collected rubber, paper, and chunks of coal scattered from the trains lumbering through the edge of town. Small, seemingly insignificant things had value if you collected enough of

them to sell for scrap. He and his brother Nick learned that working hard and contributing effort was a necessity when the bounty of a good harvest was at hand. For many families, meals were often meager, and the best spread of the day was likely to be found in the Clark Fork school lunchroom, where Dave and his brother knew they could rely on their aunt working as a school cook to dish out extra helpings for them and their buddies.

When his father died in 1945 and his mother experienced frequent hospitalizations, at the age of eleven, Dave was thrust into the role of the head of the household. He credited the tightly bound community of Clark Fork for the shared protective embrace and the sound mentorship offered by those who helped hold him up and who never failed to emphasize the importance of continuing his education. This guidance was the cornerstone for building Dave's lifelong approach to using his insatiable curiosity to never stop learning.

On Valentine's Day 1951, Dave had his first romantic date with Mary Henderson, who lived on a ranch across the Clark Fork River from where Dave lived. This romance propelled them into their 71-year adventure together. Their marriage was filled with passion, fun, learning, traveling, and building a shared life with their two sons, their beloved grandchildren, and their dedication to education and giving back to the community as part of their commitment to fulfill the promise of passing on to others the same generosity of guidance and encouragement that had uplifted them.

Dave started college at the University of Idaho in 1952, using Franklin Roosevelt's social security program and Workman's Comp from a sawmill accident to help pay his tuition. In the entirety of his life, Dave never once complained about the taxes he paid; he was always thankful for the social safety net provided to him by his fellow citizens.

Dave's first teaching position started in August of 1955 in Delta Junction, Alaska. Mary and their newborn son, Tim, joined him there on October 1 in Fairbanks, Alaska. Driving back to Fort Greely in an old open-air Jeep, the young new parents forgot about Tim's exposed skin and inadvertently introduced him at an early age to the menace of frostbite. This did not prove to be a bad first impression of this vast expanse of the northern hemisphere because Dave always loved the wild, far north. If you ever had the good fortune to go camping with him, he would gleefully recite multiple Robert Service poems around the campfire.

The family's next adventure began in Deary, Idaho, where Scott was born. Dave taught students, coached teams, drove the school bus, and there in this small, remote town, he discovered he could provide impact on a community in much the same way as the mentors of his youth supported him in Clark Fork. In celebration of his influence, Deary was where Dave discovered an opportunity to show off his other talents.

Around this time, Dave became enamored with dancing, singing, and storytelling. He playfully admitted he could tell a good story, even if his enthusiasm for singing and dancing was a bit short on talent. This did not bother Dave because he continued to find joy in these pursuits throughout his life. Perhaps it is also when he first understood that his brilliance came from being himself and sharing his gifted intelligence and kindness with people. He became a lifelong patron of the arts and was endlessly fascinated by the creative paths traveled by others. Dave appreciated what people could do and never hesitated to express admiration for a person's efforts.

After a brief stop at teaching in Caldwell, Idaho, Dave found a teaching position in Cheney, Washington, where he spent the next 60 years of his life. Cheney was the perfect fit for Dave's curiosity, because what was once a

quaint farm town was now expanding with a growing population centered on the college. A majority of the professors at EWSC took advantage of the massive federal government investment in people through the distribution of grants and scholarships for math and sciences, due in no small part to the Russian space race. Dave's timing was just right: it was fortuitous to be proficient in teaching math in an era promoting the superiority of the energized USA.

Dave loved people, and teaching exposed him to thousands of innovative and exciting perspectives that kept his curiosity burning. Although he was a mathematics professor, he always liked to say, "I teach people," as a fundamental adherence to his lifelong pledge to bring an understanding of the complexities of math to people. A particular favorite of his was to join an English professor for a team teaching of the classic book *Alice in Wonderland*, and how the mathematical genius of author Lewis Carroll was peppered throughout.

Cheney was where Dave and Mary planted their activism firmly into the soul of the community. As gardeners with perpetually green thumbs, their remarkable talents were rooted in their humble North Idaho beginnings, which reflected their entire approach to living a good life. They espoused sustainability and healthy, natural eating long before most of us caught on to how eating "naturally" is nothing new and growing a garden is a wonderful way to embrace nature.

Dave was always an advocate and organizer not only for learning, but also for worker rights, civil rights, voter rights, women's rights, and the need to understand the bigger world and how it affects others. He exposed his sons and grandchildren to the variation of different cultures, reminding them of how misperceptions create social injustice. Dave led by asking others to follow his example by never crossing a picket line. Dave did not allow grapes to touch

the family table until the boycotts by Hispanic migrant workers of the United Farm Workers were given better working conditions. If he spotted an issue that needed attention or a position needing correction, he called it out by writing to the editor of the Spokane newspaper. His letters were published because he was adept at making a solid, fact-based argument. He was especially proud of the employees of Eastern Washington University becoming the first higher education institution in the state of Washington to organize for collective bargaining rights.

After forty-two years in the classroom--thirty-one of those years in the University setting-- Dave spent the next twenty-nine years in his quest to "learn it all before he died" as he once stated to a writing partner.

Not only did Dave excel in gardening, but he was also a talented woodworker, knife sharpener, card player, adventurer, and mirth maker, especially when he shared those skills with younger generations. As a consummate "do-er, he was hardly ever without a project, a letter to write, or a windmill to charge. He could find great fulfillment in making toy cars for children with his buddies, who named themselves the Wood Chippers.

He volunteered to be the maintenance man at Hope House in Spokane, where Mary assisted homeless women with restoring their lives. Dave seldom said "no" to numerous other requests for "elbow grease philanthropy. He especially immersed himself in the Ice Age Floods Institute, Cheney-Spokane Chapter, always educating, charting fundraising efforts, and creating awareness of the epic events of how the ice age floods carved out the shape of our environment and ultimately the way we live, travel, consume, and enjoy our lives in this corner of the Pacific Northwest. For millennia, the people who settled here would never have imagined how incredible this story was; it seems exactly right that Dave grew up near the place where the river broke through the ice dam, scouring and gouging through volcanic rock as it tumbled

towards the Pacific.

What Dave truly loved throughout his 91 years and 16 days were people. He appreciated people: their stories, their smiles, the comfort of their loving embraces, and perhaps most of all, what they had to say, because Dave never met anyone he could not engage with on a personal level. He connected with people on five different continents, celebrated their uniqueness, defended their right to humanity, and expanded his great capacity to care for others.

Now we celebrate David Daugharty as we knew him: with joy, humor, and great affection. His family of Tim, Kim, Scott, Patty, Conor, Katie, Piper, Quinn, and a passel of nephews, nieces, and cousins invite you to Celebrate the “Old Man” Dave Daugharty on October 11, 2025, in Cheney, WA, at Hargreaves Hall at High Noon. The stories we share about Dave’s humanity, his journey, playfulness, and audacity will be an opportunity for us to create an epic of our own: to honor Dave and welcome each other as kin in the tribe Dave would be proud to belong to.

In lieu of flowers, please donate to: American Humanist Society or the Cheney-Spokane Chapter of the Ice Age Floods Institute

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

OCT 11. 12:00 PM (PT)

Hargreaves Hall - Eastern Washington University
616 Study Lane
Cheney, WA 99004

Tribute Wall

GM

“*Dave was my math & science teacher in the Deary, Idaho high school. Back then he was not much older than his students. But his skills to engage his student into learning was remarkable, indeed! And his attention on each one of us was such that the tools to exceed in life were provided. With me, Dave was my mentor who changed my life forever. With his guidance at my age in his classes I was given the direction in choosing engineering as a career. And a wonderful career, indeed. Dave, thank you! Will always keep you in my thoughts & memories.*

George Miller - October 03, 2025 at 04:47 PM

DR

“*Dave was always a ray of sunshine with a genuine and sweet smile. He displayed kindness and interest in our lives. His intelligence and curiosity made conversing with him positive and enlightening and his humor was contagious. We are so fortunate to have known him and Mary.*
Debi and Dick Roccanova

Debi and Dick Roccanova - October 02, 2025 at 10:31 PM

BF

“*Dave was a fundamentally good force for us as middle and high school students - an outstanding man of character and positive influence. And this carried on later with us as a dear friend and counselor. We loved him and Mary dearly.*
Bernal and Claudia Femreite

Bernal and Claudia Femreite - October 01, 2025 at 04:31 PM