

# Fred Graham – 1936-2016



Fred Graham

Frederick Artman Graham died July 27, 2016. He was 79.

Fred was born Aug. 21, 1936, in Butler, Pa., to Robert Humphries Graham II and Jennie Marie Schottenheimer.

At 15, he met and fell in love with Shirley Ann Ramelli. Their story began with him walking past her home on his way from work at Friedman's Grocery Store. Their early years included flirting on the stoop outside Shirley's home, a nationwide separation, a passionate reunion, an elopement to Maryland in 1955 and taking up residence in the swept-up and wallpapered chicken coop of Fred's older sister until they got on their feet. In the decades that followed, they took well-calculated risks, made great choices and enjoyed some good luck. The couple had a long and trusting companionship, enriched by four children, 11 grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren. Fred and Shirley lived in Pennsylvania, California, Nevada, Oregon and Washington throughout their 61 years of marriage.

Fred was a natural entrepreneur, making savvy business deals even as a young boy. As he matured, he was driven by his work ethic, strong values and desire to provide a good life for his family. Fred loved to drive and explore new places. When he was 25, he loaded his 1959 Chevy with his young family and

took off from western Pennsylvania to southern California in search of new opportunities. More road trips took the family along countless blue highways and through many mountain passes.

On one such occasion Fred fell in love, once again. This time it was with the blue sky and crystal waters of Lake Tahoe, and he set his sights on relocating his family to the region. He reached that goal in 1977 by becoming the president and CEO of Tahoe Valley Electric Supply. He soon hired his wife and son to help him run the business. Fred was a successful and well-respected businessman and employer who led the corporation with both integrity and candor until his retirement in 2002.

In recent years, Fred continued to enjoy road tripping. Boating and fishing were also favorite pastimes and earned him the nickname "Fred of the Lake". Always practical, Fred was "green" long before it was stylish as he delighted in acquiring, reusing and repurposing cast away or pre-owned items at great bargain prices. He forever marveled at the beauty of natural landscapes, revered all wildlife, and had a deep appreciation for the perfectly grilled steak with a thick slice of sourdough bread and a chunk of cold butter.

Fred leaves behind his wife, Shirley; their children Debby (Darell), Diane, Dan (Debbie) and Denise (Steve); grandchildren Dan (Kim), David, Danielle (Brian), Kari (Jackie), Casey, Jessica, Bryan (Stephanie), Darren, Amanda, Jason, and Graham; great-grandchildren Danica, Dylan, Damion, Trey, Dominic, Faith, Ryleigh, Braylon, and Aiden; brother Bob; and numerous nieces, nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews. Fred was preceded in death by his sister, Theola (aka "Toady"), and brother Jim.

There was a private service. The family declines flowers and donations, but is grateful for condolences. Cards and notes can be sent to [reshirleygraham@gmail.com](mailto:reshirleygraham@gmail.com) or Graham Family, c/o Chateau at Valley Center, 4450 Davis Ave. S, Renton, WA 98055.