

9-6-2023

Smokejumper biographies for 1956 rookie class

National Smokejumper Association

Jess L. Abney (Missoula '56)

Jess was born July 19, 1934, in Springfield, Missouri, where he grew up and graduated from Central H.S. in 1951. He then earned his bachelor's from Drury University in Springfield before starting a 32-year career with the Marine Corps. Jess retired with the rank of Sergeant Major. After the Marine Corps, Jess worked in city government in Springfield. He jumped at Missoula during the 1956 season.

David F. Barnhardt (Missoula '56)

David, retired Commander USN, died January 21, 2010, in Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina. He received degrees from Wingate College, Appalachian State and George Washington University. His Navy career spanned 22 years. David graduated from flight school in 1958, had many carrier landings in his A-3 and flew 120 combat missions over Vietnam. He was involved with the Gideons for over 20 years, specializing in prison ministry. David jumped at Missoula during the 1956 season.

Robert W. Benzie (Missoula '56)

Robert was born February 2, 1936, in Honolulu, Hawaii, where his parents were in the Army—father in the Army Air Corps and mother a nurse with the Army. He left Hawaii in 1942 and moved to Great Falls, Montana, where he graduated from Great Falls H.S. in 1955. Robert got his bachelor's from Montana State College in 1959 and served in the Army Reserves from 1953-61.

He was an Art Teacher and worked as a tax agent for the Burlington Northern Railway for 20 years retiring in February 1998. Robert lives in Billings, Montana (2021). He jumped at Missoula during the 1956 season.

William B. "Bill" Brophy (Cave Junction '56)

Bill, 81, died May 20, 2018, of a severe brain injury sustained as a result of a fall in Santa Cruz, Calif. He moved to Redding as a child and jumped there 1957-59 after his rookie year in Cave Junction. Bill received university degrees from the U.C. Berkley and U.C. Davis. He had a 30-year teaching career at Chabot College in California.

After retirement, Bill wrote a nature column for the "Ridge Rider News" in Shingletown, CA. He was a runner and bicyclist who, when they first met, told his future wife, Kay, that he had totaled as many running miles as the circumference of the earth.

Charles W. “Charlie” Brown (Idaho City '56)

Charlie was born January 3, 1937, in a farmhouse about six miles west of Rush Springs, Oklahoma. The family moved to Long Beach, California, when he was 4-6 years old. “My father worked as an overhead crane operator at the Douglas Plant which built C-47s. At age six, we moved to Midwest City, Oklahoma when my father applied for employment at the new Douglas Plant which was built adjacent to Tinker Air Force Base, East of Oklahoma City.” He graduated from Midwest City H.S. in 1955 and the University of Oklahoma in 1960 with a bachelor’s in Chemical Engineering followed by an MBA from the University of Utah in 1968

Work Career:

- 1) Atomics International: Design and Plant Engineer, Chatsworth, Calif one year
- 2) Standard Oil Company of California, Engineering Dept. San Francisco four years
- 3) Chevron Corp Refining, Salt Lake City, UT, four years
- 4) Chevron Corp, Texas Division, El Paso, TX Refinery two years
- 5) Chevron Corporation, Western Division, Denver, CO, seven years
- 6) Chevron Corp, Texas Division, Houston, Texas one year
- 7) Koch Industries, Wichita, KS, 19 years

Charlie jumped at Idaho City 1956 and at McCall 1957-59. He is an NSA Life Member and was NSA Treasurer for seven years.

F. James Clatworthy (Missoula '56)

Prof. Emeritus F. James “Jim” Clatworthy (MSO-56), Life Member, died January 10, 2018, in Port Huron, Michigan, at the age of 82. He worked two summers ('54 & '55) under Ranger Skip Stratton (MSO-47) on the Canyon Dist., Clearwater N.F., Idaho. Jim jumped at Missoula in 1956 but was injured (cement burns nearly severed both Achilles tendons) just before his '57 season. He joined the Michigan Air National Guard's, 107th Photo Recon Squadron in April 1958, and served six years with Honorable discharge in 1964.

Jim earned his bachelor's, master's, and PH.D. degrees from the University of Michigan and was the Associate Dean in the School of Education at Oakland University, Rochester, Michigan.

Jim helped organize the MSO-56 class 50th reunion as part of the 2006 Trail Projects to renovate the Double Arrow Lookout, Seeley Lake, Ranger District, Lolo N.F. Somewhere under the support beams you'll find the

signatures of the magnificent seven 56'ers, if they haven't been covered with paint.

The magnificent seven: Jim Clatworthy, Don Courtney, Larry Nelson, Bill Murphy, Roland Pera, Ron Stoleson, and Bob Whaley.

His article, "The Legacy of Skip Stratton and the Ridge Runner" appeared in the July 2012, issue of the *Smokejumper* magazine and provides an extensive biography, so check it out in the magazine's archives. Jim said he will enjoy his "high mountain two-manner" after he passes and will check in from time to time at the Double Diamond Lookout to replenish fond memories of a great workweek and smokejumper fellowship.

Donald Dean Comstock (Missoula '56)

Don, 53, died February 27, 1990, from complications following surgery. He was born March 6, 1936, in Lincoln, Illinois. He moved to Missoula in 1956 and attended the University of Montana Forestry School. After college he worked for the USFS for 32 years.

His occupation at time of death is listed as "photo lab engineer" for USFS. He jumped at Missoula 1956 and 1959.

Kenneth Lee Cornell (Missoula '56)

Ken, 84, died May 27, 2020, in Palm Coast, Florida. He was born April 29, 1936, in Crookston, Minnesota. He married Sara Riley August 13, 1960 in Nobles, MN. He jumped at Missoula during the 1956 season making seven practice and three fire jumps.

Donald V. "Don" Courtney (Missoula '56)

Don was born March 8, 1935, in Shawnee, Oklahoma, where he grew up and graduated from Shawnee H.S. in 1953. He earned his bachelor's in Geology from Oklahoma University in 1957 and his master's in Journalism from the same school in 1975. Don entered the Marine Corps in 1957 as an Engineer Officer and retired in 1985 as a Colonel (Reserve). Don was a career CIA Operations/Paramilitary Officer and retired from Staff as a GS-15 in 1985. He spent another 25 years as an independent contractor working in Virginia, North Carolina, Southeast Asia, Africa, Europe, Central America, and the Middle East. Don retired for good in 2005 and currently (2022) lives in Bonner, Montana. Don jumped at Missoula 1956-57, 61, and at West Yellowstone in 1962.

Charles Thomas Dieffenbach (Grangeville '56)

Charles died July 23, 1962, in northern Laos when his Air America Helio Courier was shot down. He survived the crash but died on the trail as he attempted to walk out. He jumped at Grangeville 1956 and at Missoula 1957 and had served three years in the Marine Corps. Charles was from New Jersey where his father was a school Principal.

Thad D. Duel (McCall '56)

Thad died of cancer December 28, 2005, at St. Luke's Medical Center, in Boise. He was born July 14, 1932, in Carmen, Oklahoma. He was raised in Oklahoma and got his bachelor's degrees in history and education while attending Oklahoma State on a football scholarship.

Thad taught and coached football in Oklahoma, Kansas, and Idaho. He was a school principal in Fairfield, Idaho, and Beaver, Oklahoma, and worked summers as a smokejumper at McCall (1956-87) where he put in 32 seasons and had over 400 jumps. Thad logged over 120 days a season skiing and could be found playing tennis or hiking during the other months.

James I. Edison (Cave Junction '56)

Marine Lt. James "Jim" Edison was killed October 2, 1961, when his F9F Cougar went over the side while making a landing on the USS Antietam. The carrier was operating in the Gulf of Mexico and the aircraft and Jim were "lost at sea."

Jim starred in football and basketball at Jacksonville (NC) High School and later in basketball at Louisburg College in North Carolina where he graduated in 1958. He jumped at CJ for the 1956 and 1957 seasons. This obit is added 50 years later from information that came in from our members.

In July 2014, ex-Naval Aviator, Jim Hayes contacted the NSA with more details on the accident that took Jim's life. The board of review said the cause of the accident was a maintenance error in that a disconnect nut on the tail section of the aircraft had not been properly installed. The tail of the aircraft separated upon landing and, instead of being stopped by the tail hook, the aircraft went over the side and into the ocean.

James E. Eggers (Cave Junction '56)

Jim, of Elk Grove, California, died February 19, 2009. He attended college in Santa Barbara and Ashland, Oregon, where he was active in polo and was offered a baseball contract with the Philadelphia Phillies. Jim started a successful collection business known as Northwest Creditors and retired at age 49. He jumped at Cave Junction in 1956.

Charles W. Evans (Missoula '56)

Charles, 26, died November 10, 1962, in Missoula, Montana, following a volleyball game at the Aerial Fire Depot. He was born March 31, 1936. Cause of death is listed as "cerebral hemorrhage." He is buried in the Hillcrest Cemetery in Deer Lodge, Montana. He jumped Missoula 1956, 59-62, and Grangeville 1957.

Larry A. Fellows (McCall '56)

Larry, 78, died Feb. 17, 2013, in Columbia City, Oregon, from lung cancer. After earning a degree in Forest Management from the University of Idaho in 1957, Larry joined the Army and served two years at Ft. Huachuca, Arizona.

Following his discharge, he began his career with the U.S. Forest Service, working as a timber sales officer and timber management assistant in the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest in La Grande, Oregon, from 1960 to 1963.

Larry became director at the Forest Service Cispus Job Corp Center in Randle, Washington. He became Deputy Forest Supervisor of the Black Hills National Forest in Custer, South Dakota, during 1969-74; he then went to Region 6 in Portland, Oregon, to work as staff director for the Manpower Development Department. Larry became Forest Supervisor of the Siuslaw National Forest in Corvallis, Oregon, in 1976.

After retirement Larry enjoyed fishing for salmon on the Columbia River and was an enthusiastic traveler in his recreational vehicle. He jumped at McCall during the 1956 season and always said smokejumping was one of the best times in his life.

Wayne George Foltz (McCall '56)

Wayne, 55, died March 1985 in Driggs, Idaho, in a car accident. He was born November 13, 1929, in Decorah, Iowa. Wayne graduated from

Pocatello H.S. and attended Idaho State University for a year. He was in the Navy for four years during the Korean War.

Wayne received his bachelor's and master's degrees in Forestry from the University of Idaho and worked for the Forest Service in Idaho, Utah and Wyoming. He jumped at McCall 1956-57.

Richard F. Garner (McCall '56)

Richard, 82, died April 26, 2020. He was a Boise High School and College of Idaho graduate. He was living in Mesa, Arizona, at the time of his death. Richard jumped at McCall in 1956 and 1958.

Jerrald E. "Jerry" Giles (McCall '56)

Jerry died August 10, 2014, in Grass Valley, California. He graduated from the University of Idaho 1959 and earned his master's degree in 1973.

Jerry's 20-year career in the Marine Corps began in 1959 where he rose to the rank of Lt. Colonel. He served three tours in Vietnam where he earned the Silver Star, two Bronze Stars, the Navy Commendation Medal, and a Purple Heart. While in Vietnam from September 1966 through July 1967 he commanded Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines, 3rd Marine Division.

Jerry finally retired in 1998 to Grass Valley. He jumped at McCall 1956-59. Jerry was buried at Arlington National Cemetery in February 2015.

Jimmie Hamilton Hardisty (Cave Junction '56)

Jimmie, 80, of Creswell, Oregon, passed away October 17, 2017. He was born March 9, 1937, in Rio Tinto, Nevada. He married Corela Swanson in 1960. They initially lived in Portland, then moved to Creswell in 1970. Jim owned and operated the local Harley-Davidson Sales Co, located on Franklin Blvd in Eugene. He later worked for U Lane O Credit Union and Register Guard Credit Union. Jimmie jumped at Cave Junction during the 1956 season.

Robert W. "Bob" Hewitt (Missoula '56)

Bob was born February 5, 1936, in Little Rock, Arkansas. He grew up in Memphis, Tennessee, and graduated from Central H.S. in 1954. Bob then earned his bachelor's degree from Memphis University and his DDS from

the University Tennessee College of Dentistry in 1961. He jumped at Missoula 1956-58.

Bob served on active duty in the U.S. Public Health Service as Senior Assistant Dental Surgeon with duty assignments in the Division of Indian Health at Laguna Pueblo, New Mexico, and the U.S. Coast Guard Base at Ketchikan, Alaska.

In 1964 Bob established a private dental practice in Memphis which he maintained from 1962 until his retirement in 2001. Following his 40-plus years of private practice Bob worked as the clinical consultant for a large local commercial dental lab. Bob also volunteered on the part-time faculty at UT College of Dentistry.

Bob and his wife, Betty, live in Germantown, TN, at the Village of Germantown.

Herbert “Herb” Hidu (North Cascades '56)

Herb was born in Fairfield, Connecticut, in 1931. He enlisted in the Army in 1951 and was a paratrooper with the 82nd Airborne. With the help of the GI Bill, he earned his Ph.D. studying at the Univ. of Connecticut, Penn State, and Rutgers with an emphasis on marine shellfish. Herb jumped at NSCB during the 1956 season and got four fire jumps. His major professional work has been with marine shellfish research working with the U.S. Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, Rutgers University, the University of Maryland, and the University of Maine. His work at the Univ. of Maine was 20 plus years working with graduate students laying the groundwork for Maine's oyster industry. “There are now, after 50 years, 150 new oyster farms.” Herb is retired living in Alna, Maine.

“I was only at it (smokejumping) for one summer, but it continues to be an important event in my life. One must stand for something and that is what I stand for.”

Joseph John Janus (Missoula '56)

Joe, 43, died in Missoula May 14, 1979, of cancer. He was born January 22, 1936, in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. Joe graduated from the University of Indiana with a bachelor's degree and from the University of Montana with a master's in Biology.

Joe taught school in Myersdale, Pennsylvania, for 13 years. He was in the Navy from 1957 to 1959. In 1975 he moved to Missoula and became a full-time smokejumper. Joe jumped at Missoula 1956 and 1963-78.

Thomas C. “Shep” Johnson (McCall '56)

Shep died April 20, 2016, in Boise, Idaho. He graduated from New Meadows High School and joined the Marines in 1951 during the Korean War where he was wounded in action. Shep went back to Idaho and was working on a ranch when he joined the McCall Smokejumpers in 1956. He was recruited and joined the CIA and spent 15 years working for the Agency in Southeast Asia. This story has been printed in *Smokejumper* magazine and will be run again in this (Oct. 2016) issue.

When he returned to the states, Shep went to work for the BLM and retired in 1990 and moved to Vale, Oregon, where he raised horses and cattle.

Arthur H. “Art” Jukkala (Missoula '56)

Art died July 12, 1999, while on an NSA Trail Crew Project in the Bob Marshall Wilderness. He graduated from the University of Montana in 1957 and later received his master's in Fire Science in 1966. Art worked most of his 32 years of federal service with the Technology and Development Center in Missoula. He was the founder of the NSA's Trail Maintenance Program.

Clarence Earl Keeley (North Cascades '56)

Earl, 48, died May 9, 1985. He was born May 15, 1936, in Vancouver, Canada, where he was a star athlete playing football, rugby, basketball, and was quarterback on BC High School Championship team. Earl then played football for Wenatchee Valley College 1955-56 before transferring to the University of Montana in 1957. During the 1957 season at Montana, he completed 63 passes for 797 yards and six touchdowns.

He later played professional football for six seasons in the Canadian Football League for the British Columbia Lions and Montreal Alouettes. Earl jumped at NCSB during the 1956 season and had five fire jumps.

Patrick W. “Pat” Lee (McCall '56)

Pat was born May 19, 1937, in Omaha, Nebraska. He grew up in Atkinson, Nebraska, where he graduated from St. Joseph's Hall H.S. in 1955. Pat earned a bachelor's from College of St. Thomas (Atkinson) in 1959, and his LL.B. from Georgetown University School of Law in 1962. “Following Naval OCS in 1963, I served as a naval attorney in the Office of

the Judge Advocate General in Washington, D.C. Upon leaving the Navy in 1966, I joined the law firm Pogue & Neal in Washington, D.C. I became a partner in the firm several years later. I practiced law for 44 years, the last 36 as a founding partner of Crowell and Moring, with offices in several states and foreign countries.

“I retired to live in Idaho at the age of 70. My old smokejumper buddy, Jack Brown, and I bought a quarter section in the Sawtooth Valley and built a ranch. My wife, Janis, and I moved to Boise two years ago (2022).” Pat jumped at McCall 1956-57

James J. “Jim” Lehfeltd (Grangeville '56)

Jim was born March 27, 1937, in Ryegate, Montana, where he grew up and graduated from Ryegate H.S. in 1955. He earned a master's in Electrical Engineering from Montana State University in 1963.

Work Career: Honeywell Automatic Flight Control, Martin Marietta Flight Control, King Radio Corporation Automatic Flight Control. Designed Autopilot for the Voyager Aircraft for pilots Dick Rutan and Jeana Yeager for their non-stop flight around the world.

Retirement: Retired 2010 after 47 years of very interesting and enjoyable work.

Personal Comments: Smokejumping was best job, great experience meeting and working with young guys and girls from all states who always had interesting backgrounds and stories. Jim jumped at Grangeville 1956-57, 1959-61, and at Missoula 1958. Jim is an NSA Life Member.

Terry D. Lewton (McCall '56)

Terry died July 14, 2016, in the Boise VA Medical Center. He graduated from the University of Utah, where he played football on a full scholarship, with a degree in business. Shorty, afterwards he joined the Army where he spent most of his enlistment in Germany. Terry spent over 20 years with Boise Cascade before pursuing other interests. He jumped at McCall 1956-57, 59-60, 64-65 and a year at Idaho City in 1958.

Joseph M. “Joe” Lord (Missoula '56)

Joe, 80, died June 26, 2016, in Buffalo Creek, CO. He was born December 14, 1935, in Burlington, CO. Joe graduated from the University of Iowa with a degree in civil engineering before entering the US Army.

After two of his college summers as a ground pounder, Joe jumped at Missoula for the 1956-58 seasons.

Joe began his professional career with Boeing before going to work as an agricultural engineer for the Bureau of Reclamation and the Agency for International Development in Thailand. He returned to the states in 1971 and settled in Fresno, California.

Joe was a pioneer in irrigation management in California's Central Valley establishing weather stations to determine crop water requirements before the State thought of the idea. Eventually the State established the California Irrigation Management Info. System which is in operation today.

Joe was active in the NSA Trails Program and was on a project only ten days before his death.

Fred G. Malroy (Missoula '56)

Fred, 67, died of natural causes near his Fountain Hills home while sharpening his marksmanship skills at the Rio Salado Sportsman's Club on Saturday, March 20, 2003.

He loved the outdoors. Fred's career spanned 25 years in the Bureau of Indian Affairs as a forester and was followed by many years as real estate agent, part-time local historian, and orator.

Fred was a graduate of Oregon State University with a degree in forest management. In his youth he served his country honorably in the U.S. Marines and later treated every excursion as a military expedition, whether he was with his wife, outdoorsmen friends or "grandbabies," as he loved to call them. Fred and wife Rosemarie were life partners for 42 years.

Michael H. McCormick (North Cascades '56)

Mike died June 10, 2023, in Portland, Oregon. He was born October 7, 1937, in Tawas City, Michigan, and grew up in Okanogan, Washington, Enterprise, Oregon, and John Day, Oregon, where he graduated from Grant Union H.S. in 1956. He earned a bachelor's in Political Science from the University of Oregon in 1960. Mike was career U.S. Army (1960-86) and retired as a Colonel and served two tours in Vietnam as an Infantry officer. He jumped at NCSB 1956-57.

Michael Dean "Mike" McCullough (Missoula '56)

Mike, 66, died November 3, 2001, in Enumclaw, WA of renal cancer. He was born October 6, 1937, in Tacoma, Washington. Mike jumped Missoula 1956 and 1960, Grangeville 1958, and Fairbanks 1959.

Mike lived a great life with his spouse Leslie who he married in 1965. They had two children Jodie (Arlington) and Mark (Stanwood). Mike was a gifted athlete and loved the "woods" and his family. His brother Tom was also a smokejumper at Missoula.

Mike was employed by "Western Gear Corp" for his entire career.

Robert A. Mecham (McCall '56)

Robert was born in Boise, Idaho, in 1937, and grew up in Nampa where he graduated from Nampa H.S. in 1955. He then graduated from the University of Idaho in 1958, and the Northwestern Dental School in 1962 before going into the Army 1962-64. Robert's dental practice was in Spokane, Washington, 1965-95. "Smokejumping—the best job I ever had. McCall was wonderful and I made many lifetime friends in those three summers. Love the reunions." Robert jumped at McCall 1956-59.

Douglas K. Michaelson (Missoula '56)

Doug was killed in an auto accident in October 1957 in Iowa. He was returning from a visit to Bob Hewitt (Missoula'56) when he fell asleep at the wheel. He jumped at Missoula during the 1956-57 seasons.

Malcolm C. "Mac" Montgomery (Missoula '56)

Malcolm Crostin "Mac" Montgomery born December 29, 1936, in Ft. Collins, CO and died March 17, 1959.

Mac was born and raised in Colorado. He graduated from Cache La Poudre High School at La Porte, CO in 1954. He spent two years attending CO State University (1954-56), then immediately after jumping during the summer of 1956, entered the USN as a naval air cadet. He then attended Naval flying school at Pensacola, FL and received his Ensign Commission in May of 1958 at Kingsville, TX Naval Air Station. In the fall he was assigned to the photo reconnaissance squadron at Hickman AFB near Honolulu, HI.

On March 17, 1959, about 4:00 p.m. and he was flying a training mission over the Pacific about thirty miles south of Barber Point. He was piloting a F9F Cougar fighter jet and working with the destroyer escort, USS

Ramsden. He was practicing dives over the ocean while the ship was tracking him with radar. Investigators later believed he swerved at the last minute to avoid hitting the ship. His plane went into a steep dive and into the ocean. Neither his body nor the aircraft were recovered.

William C. “Bill” Murphy (Missoula '56)

Bill died February 23, 2016, in Dillon, Montana. Murph graduated from Hellgate High School and the University of Montana. He had a career with the USFS with positions in Oregon, Washington, South Dakota, Utah, and Idaho.

Murph jumped at Missoula 1956-64 and had 29 fire jumps during the busy 1961 fire season and was the IC on many fires after his jumper career. He was very active in the NSA Trails Program and loved to ski. The Griz have lost one of their most ardent fans.

Benito O. “Ben” Musquez (Missoula '56)

Ben joined the Army at age 17 and was a member of the 82nd Airborne Division. After seeing the movie *Red Skies of Montana*, he decided to become a smokejumper. After a stint with the Oak Grove Hotshots in Southern California, he rookied at Missoula where he jumped the 1956-57 seasons. Ben eventually returned to the Army and was in active duty in 1964 with tours in Vietnam to follow. He attended Northwestern State University for two years. Ben was the recipient of many medals including the Bronze Star. He and his wife raised six children all of whom have served in the military. Ben lives in Iredell, Texas, and is an NSA Life Member.

Gerald “Gerry” Nystrom (Missoula '56)

Gerry died June 10, 1997, in Modesto, California. He was born October 21, 1936, in Republic, Kansas and attended schools in Courtland, Kansas before getting his degree from Colorado A&M. Gerry became a Navy on the aircraft carrier USS *Ranger*. After leaving the military, he flew for United Airlines for 30 years before retiring in 1994. Gerry jumped at Missoula during the 1956-57 seasons.

Robert W. “Bob” Pell (North Cascades '56)

Bob died April 22, 2014, in Conconully, WA. He attended Wenatchee Valley College where he played on the National Junior College Championship football team. Bob then graduated from Western Washington with his degree in Education and taught and coached at Pioneer Jr. H.S. and Wenatchee High School for 30 years.

In addition to his teaching career, Bob worked for 40 years for the USFS managing the Wenatchee and Moses Lake Tanker Bases. He jumped at North Cascades during the 1956 season.

Roland P. Pera (Missoula '56)

"I was born in rural North Dakota on June 30, 1936, in the heart of the Great Depression. This was also during an epic drought and heat wave which punished the middle of the country. When I was six days old the temperature reached 120 degrees, a record that still stands for the state. Our closest town, which was also our address was Woodworth, population around 150. The town still exists with a population of 25 to 30. I was born at home which was not unusual at that time.

"In ND we lived in a house with no electricity and no running water (our running water was running down to the well and "fetching" a pail of water). I attended a one-room school a half-mile down the road. One year my oldest sister was my teacher. There were somewhere around a dozen students attending the school. About half of the students were my brothers and sisters and my cousins. We had some hairy times walking to school and back home in the winter months.

"When I was in the 6th grade, we left ND moving to a very small town in western Minnesota. Miliona, Minnesota is in the heart of lake country. We certainly enjoyed the fishing, swimming, and boating the area provided. My father was a Lutheran pastor, so I participated in a few moves - from Minnesota to South Dakota, then to Russell KS, and finally to Hanover, KS in northern Kansas. My father was able to preach in German, so all these congregations had German and English services.

"I graduated from Concordia High School, Seward, NE in 1954. There were 43 of us in our graduating class. My college years were a bit stretched out, first attending a teacher's college in Nebraska, and then matriculating to Kansas University and graduating in 1961 with a major in Music Education (later with a master's degree also in Music Ed).

'My first "real job" was teaching vocal music for seven years in a Kansas City suburb. During that span of time, I married Betty, also a teacher, who brought us two girls into this world. We are proud of and love our three

grandchildren.

“After seven years of teaching, I decided to become a stockbroker, a career that lasted 38 years (the last five I was half-retired). The stockbroker of today hardly resembles the stockbroker of 1968 when I started. This is probably true of many professions.

“Retirement has been good to us. We have done considerable traveling which included 16 or 17 cruises, many of those to Europe. Good health has allowed me to go skiing until two years ago. I enjoyed skiing with my good friend Bill Murphy. JB Stone, another smokejumper friend, and I hiked to the summit of six 14,000 peaks in Colorado. By far the most ambitious was Longs Peak. A lot of our travels have been to reunions (I come from a large family).

“We are active in our church even though it is 11 miles away. I directed the bell choir at our church for some 25 years. Traveling to Missoula in the summers during retirement has been very special to me. There was nothing better than seeing my old smokejumper friends while “toiling” on a number of projects in the forests of Montana and Idaho.” Roland jumper at Missoula 1956-59, and 1961.

Ernest James “Buck” Pino (North Cascades '56)

Buck, 57, died February 21, 1996, of pneumonia. He was born March 28, 1938, in Gallup, N.M. At the age of 5, he moved to Omak with his family, where he graduated.

He was an Eagle Scout. He attended Wenatchee Valley College and Central Washington University. He served in the U.S. Army 1961-1963, including Korea.

Buck later became a fire control officer with the U.S. Forest Service retiring in 1992. He jumped at North Cascades 1956,58,59,61,63-67

Verlon Eugene Prafke (McCall '56)

Verlon, 34, died July 22, 1965, while working as a biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. He was accidentally electrocuted when an aerial on his vehicle hit a high, power line. He was born October 11, 1930, in Granada, MN., and graduated from high school there. Verlon then graduated from the University of Idaho and was a veteran of the Korean War where he served in the Army Artillery. Verlon jumped at McCall during the 1956 season.

Ronald K. Price (Cave Junction '56)

Ron, 84, died December 4, 2019, in the Philippines where he lived after his retirement. He graduated from Oregon State University in 1957 with a degree in agriculture.

Ron retired from the Marine Corps as a Colonel and jumped at Cave Junction 1956-59 prior to his enlistment.

Linwood L. Reed (Cave Junction '56)

Lin, 87, died December 13, 2017, in Muncie, Indiana. He served in the USAF for four years and graduated from Albion College (Michigan) and the American Foreign Trade Institute in Arizona.

Lin began working for Cummins Manufacturing and lived in Japan, India, Sweden and England before retiring from Borg Warner. He jumped at Cave Junction during the 1956 season.

ALLAN F. SAMUELS (Idaho City '56)

Born: 26 April, 1937, Samuels, Idaho

Grew up: Sandpoint, Driggs, and Boise, Idaho

Graduated: Boise High School in 1955

Further Education: B.S. in Civil Engineering from The University of Idaho in 1960; M.S. in Engineering from Arizona State University in 1992.

Career: Allan credits the United States Forest Service for providing the funding and practical foundation to his career. He spent the summer after high school on Horse Mountain Lookout on the West Payette. The summers of '56 and '57 he worked from Idaho City as a smokejumper. After the fire season ended, he worked on a survey crew on the Boise National Forest, locating, field designing and constructing logging access roads, which he practiced the for the next two summers.

With the Idaho Highway Department, he worked on the design of three sections of Interstate 90. Transferring to the Washington Highway Department, he worked on construction and maintenance in the Spokane District.

He was recruited by International Engineering Company and moved to Phoenix, Arizona, where he worked on water, wastewater, storm drainage and environmental assessment projects. He also worked on several road projects and located the San Salvador to Comolapa freeway in El Salvador.

He served two years as the Engineering Manager of the Ada County Highway District.

With the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT), he served as the State Airports

Engineer. He also served as the ADOT Manager of Construction Operations, where he

developed and implemented attribute-based quality management systems. He formally retired

from ADOT in 2006, but continued to work part-time in developing, delivering and managing construction training processes at the state and national levels.

Honors: Before retirement, he was registered as a professional engineer in Idaho, Washington and Arizona. He was awarded The Order of the Engineer for professional service. He is a life member of both the American Society of Civil Engineers and the National Smokejumpers Association, but he prefers the NSA because all members have demonstrated strong practical skills and have more fun!”

He lives with his wife Laura in Mesa, Arizona.

Raymond Bruce “Ray” Schenck (Missoula '56)

Ray, 63, died June 6, 1994, in the Montana Veteran’s Home in Columbia Falls, Montana. He was born August 20, 1930, in Algona, Iowa. His occupation was listed as “Rancher” and education as four years of college. Cause of death listed a Pneumonia.

Ray jumped at Missoula 1956-61 and Fairbanks 1965. Served in the Army in Korea

Roland “Ron” Marcellus Stoleson (Missoula '56)

Ron, 83, died September 9, 2019, at his home in North Ogden, Utah. He graduated from the University of Montana with a degree in Forestry and played on the University baseball team.

Ron then began a career with the Forest Service that spanned more than 40 years. He was a fire lookout, smokejumper, Hotshot crew foreman, District Ranger, Forest Supervisor and held other staff positions retiring in 2000. Ron was very active in the NSA Trails Program over the years as well as other volunteer work in the Region 4 office in Ogden. He received the Presidential Lifetime Achievement award for his volunteer work in 2014.

Ron was a Past President of the NSA and served as a board member for a number of years. He jumped at Missoula 1956-58, 60, 66 and Grangeville in 1959.

Doug Sutherland (Cave Junction '56)

Doug was born May 2, 1937, in Helena, Montana, and grew up in Spokane, Washington, where he graduated from V.R. Rogers H.S. in 1955. He then earned his bachelor’s from Central Washington University in 1959. Doug jumped at CJ in 1956 and Redding in 1957.

Doug’s career:

Boeing Renton 1960-71

Owner Tacoma Tent and Awning Co. 1971-92
Mayor Tacoma 1980-89
City Manager Seatac 1989-92
Pierce County Executive 1993-2001
Washing State Commissioner of Public Lands 2002-09
Private Consultant 2—9-12

Doug and his wife, Grace, are retired living in New River, Arizona. (2021)

Eldo Wendell “Mick” Swift (Cave Junction '56)

Mick died October 5, 1993, from a heart attack at his home in Cave Junction, Oregon. He was born May 5, 1939, in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

He started jumping a year ahead of "legal" age and repeated his 18th birthday his 2nd year. Mick worked his way up to foreman at CJ before leaving to work for Air America. He is the person in the tree in the photo on the cover of the NSA video "History of Smokejumping."

After his stint with Air America, he returned to Cave Junction where he jumped 1969-77. Mick jumped at Cave Junction 1956, 1962-65, 1969-77 and Redding 1957-61.

Charles B. “Chuck” Tribe (Missoula '56)

Chuck, 82, died on November 9, 2016, in Missoula. He first worked for the USFS on a blister rust crew in Idaho at age 17. Chuck enlisted in the Marines at age 18 and went ashore in Korea in 1952.

When he came back from his enlistment, Chuck jumped at Missoula 1956-58 while completing his degree in Forestry at the University of Montana. He then worked for the Forest Service in R-1 and was the Forest Planning Officer on the Lolo N.F. where he helped produce one of the earliest truly conservation-based Forest Plans in the Nation.

Upon retirement, Chuck served on the Five Alleys Land Trust board of directors for 27 years. His fingerprints can be found across the open and protected landscapes of the Missoula Valley. He was green long before green was ever cool. His politics were grounded in inclusiveness, our obligations to each other, and our duty to be good stewards of the earth.

Robin Ford Twogood (Missoula '56)

Robin, 82, died in the afternoon, Wednesday, March 18, 2020, at his home in Darby. He was born June 29, 1937, in Los Angeles, California. Robin jumped at Missoula 1956, 58.

Thomas R. Uphill (Missoula '56)

Tom, 80, passed away January 19, 2016. He was born April 19, 1935, in Fernie, B.C., and was a graduate of the University of Montana School of Forestry. He was a smokejumper from 1956 to 1963 and made over 100 fire jumps. Tom was a squadleader and foreman at Missoula and he ended his years as a smokejumper as Administrative Officer for the Missoula Equipment Development Center.

Tom then began a career marked with promotions to increasingly responsible positions, moving to a position in Business Management for the Division of Engineering in the Forest Service's Region Five Regional Office in San Francisco, California. He then moved to a position with the Forest Service's Region Three headquarters in Albuquerque, New Mexico followed by a tour in Eugene, Oregon on the Willamette National Forest. His last move was to Portland, Oregon, the Regional Office for Region Six. While there, he was the Regional Budget Officer and was responsible for Program Development and the Resources Planning Act in one of the Forest Service's most complex Regions.

Tom was a Foursquare pastor and chaplain at Legacy Meridian Park Hospital.

Donald R. Webb (McCall '56)

Don died July 29, 2014, after a battle with lymphoma. He was born December 16, 1933, in Decorah, Iowa, and graduated from Clear Lake H.S. He graduated from the University of Idaho with a degree in forestry and jumped at McCall 1956, 57 and 60 and at Missoula the 1958 and 59 seasons. Don recorded 104 jumps.

Between 1960 and 1967, he developed the first fire dispatch office for the Coronado National Forest and also served as the first ski ranger at the Mount Lemmon Ski Area in Arizona. From 1967 to 1973, he served as the Regional Fire Coordinator in Albuquerque.

From there he was transferred to the Gila National Forest in Silver City. He was the Fire Management Officer from 1973 to 1984 when he retired

Richard L. "Dick" Wessell (Cave Junction '56)

Dick, 82, died May 22, 2020, in Silverton, Oregon. After graduating high school in Reedsport, Oregon in 1956, he and a buddy went looking for a town with a semi-professional baseball team, as they hoped to play pro ball

one day. They stumbled on Cave Junction and the Siskiyou Smokejumper Base. His buddy wanted no part of jumping, but Dick "jumped" at the chance. Dick jumped from 1956-61, then went to the Gold Beach Ranger Station 1962-66.

He returned to Cave Junction and resumed jumping from 1966-72, including time as the Base Foreman. Dick also was a high school referee, EMT and volunteer ambulance driver. He transferred to Brookings in 1973 as the Fire Management Officer on the Chetco Ranger District. In 1979 he transferred to the Umpqua NF Supervisor's Office in Roseburg as the Assistant Fire Staff Officer and retired from the Forest Service in 1988.

During his career he also served on various forest and regional fire and incident command overhead teams as an air attack officer. After his forest service retirement, he spent six years with the Douglas County Sheriff's Office as a patrol deputy. Dick was never prouder of anything than being a smokejumper. In his later years he would not be caught in a shirt without the Siskiyou Smokejumper Base emblem.

Joe Terry West (Missoula '56)

Terry died June 17, 2018, in Springfield, MO. He graduated from Arkansas State University in 1959 where he was on a football scholarship before joining the Army. He was a helicopter pilot and retired from the Army as a Lt. Col. Terry was a member of the Vietnam Veterans Helicopter Association and the NSA.

Following his retirement and honorable discharge from the United States Army, he worked as Director of Emergency Management for the Department of Civil Defense in Greene County, MO, for six years. Terry jumped at Missoula 1956-58.

Robert G. "Bob" Whaley (Missoula '56)

Bob was born January 7, 1935, in Missoula, Montana, and graduated from Carroll College in 1958. He jumped at Missoula 1956-58 while in school. Bob entered the Marine Corps as an Air Officer candidate in September 1958. He entered flight training in January 1959 and received his wings in June 1960. Bob flew three tours in Vietnam flying over 800 missions and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and Bronze Star among the numerous other awards.

Bob retired as a Lt. Colonel in 19679 with more than 5,000 flying hours. He then went into the brokerage business and worked for 24 years. Bob is an NSA Life Member and has been very active in the trails program.

Kenneth R. Wicks (Cave Junction '56)

Former Juneau, Alaska, resident Kenneth R. Wicks died October 28, 2009, at the Queens Medical Center in Honolulu, Hawaii. He moved to Hoonah, Alaska, in 1972 where he taught until 1984. After retiring he owned and operated Beartrack Charters in Juneau. Kenneth later moved to Ocean View, Hawaii. Ken jumped at CJ during the 1956 season.

Geoffrey F. "Geof" Wilson (Missoula '56)

Geof was born April 23, 1936, in Hartford, Connecticut. He grew up in Wethersfield, a suburb of Hartford, and graduated from Wethersfield H.S. in 1954. Geof attended Paul Smiths College for one year and then transferred to the U of Montana where he graduated in 1963 with a degree in Forest Management. He took a summer job 1955 with Forest Service at Libby, Montana, where he had a wide variety of different work assignments and gained some fire experience. In 1956 he rookied at Missoula and had four fire jumps. Geof entered the army February 1957 and was a member of the 505 Airborne Battle Group, 82nd Airborne.

After leaving the Army, he took a job on the Gila N.F. handling their timber program. The next summer he took a 6-month seasonal job with the forest service in Seward and Juneau, Alaska. From there he was at the Deer Lodge Forest five years, Lolo Forest as an assistant Ranger, Flathead N.F., Gallatin N.F., and five years as Seward Alaska District Ranger. He was twice elected to Seward City Council. He finished his career as the Wind River District Ranger, Carson Washington, Gifford Pinchot Forest before retiring in 1992.

"Since then, I have been a school bus driver for sports teams [13 years] and on the governing board for Blackfoot Telecom [26 years]. For the last 25 years, I also do the logging spring and fall on our forty acres of timber located near St Regis Montana."

G. Brent Wynn (Idaho City '56)

Brent, 81, died May 22, 2019. After graduating from high school, he took his first job as a smokejumper with the USFS, spending five summers

fighting fires as a jumper. He paid his way through college, a LDS mission, and helped out with the expenses of the family farm in difficult times.

During these early adulthood years, he served an LDS mission to the Western States. He worked for Thiokol, Boeing, Evans & Sutherland, Link Flight Simulation, and retired from Hill Air Force Base. His favorite job was teaching Design Engineering and Technology at Brigham Young University.

Brent was active and proud of his good health and active lifestyle, competitively finishing 20 St. George Marathons and multiple triathlons.