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## Smokejumper Obituary: McBride, Jon Hobert (Missoula 1954)

National Smokejumper Association

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# Smokejumper Obituary

## McBride, Jon Hobert (Missoula 1954)

Jon, 74, died of acute heart failure while on a bicycle trek with the "Boys of Wednesday," a group of close friends, on June 2, 2010, near Missoula. The "boys" biked, hiked or skied every Wednesday throughout the year.

Jon graduated from Springfield, MO, Central High School in 1953, studied at Drury College in Springfield, and worked in white pine, blister rust control for the U.S. Forest Service near Haugan, Mont. He studied forestry at the University of Montana from 1954 to 1957 and, while attending the university, was a smokejumper and smokejumper squadleader in the 1954 through 1956 fire seasons. He qualified for the Navy's NAVCAD Program in 1957 and was trained as a fighter pilot, eventually flying the F-8 Crusader from the carrier Bon Homme Richard with VF 191. He also served in an instructor training squadron at Miramar, Calif. Following his discharge as a full lieutenant from the Navy in 1965, Jon was hired as one of the Mobil Oil Corporation's first corporate jet pilots. While flying for that firm, he was stationed in White Plains, N.Y., Singapore and Washington, D.C. He retired as Mobil's Worldwide Director of Aviation in 1995 and returned to Missoula where he had attended college and was based as a smokejumper.

With former smokejumper Art Jukkala (MSO-56), he founded a trail maintenance program for the National Smokejumper Association in 1999. Jukkala died of a heart attack that year while on the program's first project, and Jon assumed its lead. Under his management for the last 10 years, former and current smokejumpers have rehabilitated well over a thousand miles of trails for the U.S. Forest Service and the National Park Service and restored dozens of structures, including historic lookouts and ranger stations in Montana, Idaho, Alaska, Oregon, California, Colorado, Utah and Minnesota.

Jon also founded and managed a scholarship program in memory of Jukkala to benefit children of smokejumpers killed in the line of duty or in war. His leadership was recognized in a letter from President Barack Obama and an award from the chief of the U.S. Forest Service.

*(end of excerpt)*