

August 2006

Smokejumper Obituary: Johnson, William Kay (North Cascades 1954)

National Smokejumper Association

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Smokejumper Obituary

Johnson, William Kay (North Cascades 1954)

Kay, 72, died August 3, 2006, at his home in Wenatchee. He was born and raised in Winthrop, Washington, and grew up on the family ranch herding cattle and buck'in bails. He graduated from Winthrop High School and attended Wenatchee Valley College.

Kay enjoyed a lifelong career of smokejumping and wildland firefighting. He jumped 11 seasons before moving on in 1965 to become the Fire Management Assistant for the Entiat Ranger District.

In 1970 Kay and his newly formed family moved to Medford, where he was Assistant Fire Staff for the Rogue River National Forest. From there he moved to Anchorage, and became Chief of Services in charge of aviation and fire management for the Anchorage District of the B.L.M.

Kay retired in 1984 to become a full-time general contractor based out of Anchorage with jobs extending as far as the Kenai Peninsula. He and his wife moved to Chelan, Washington, in 1996 to fully retire.

(end of excerpt)