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Smokejumper Obituary: York, Herbert J. (Missoula 1946)

National Smokejumper Association

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Smokejumper Obituary

York, Herbert J. (Missoula 1946)

Herb, 77, passed away Nov. 4, 2003, after a hard-fought battle with lung cancer. He was born March 16, 1926, in Miles City. During the summer following his junior year in high school, Herb enlisted in the Air Force and served as a crewman on a B-29. After the war, Herb was discharged and returned to Montana to become a smokejumper. He jumped during the 1946 and 1947 fire seasons.

Herb continued to work for the Forest Service during summers while attending the University of Montana and graduated in 1950 with a degree in wildlife technology and began researching for the Fish and Game and the U.S. Forest Service. He then returned to school to finish his teaching degree while working nights at the Bonner mill and weekends at the Anaconda smelter to support his family.

Graduating with a Master of Science degree in 1953, he accepted a teaching position at St. Ignatius High School. Herb completed 33 years as a science teacher and guidance counselor at St. Ignatius. He also taught at the University of Montana after his retirement.

Herb was a gifted teacher and was recognized nationwide for his work. His physics class was honored as one of the top 10 in the United States. He was honored by the state university system for excellence in teaching chemistry and by the National Biology Teachers Association as an outstanding biology teacher. This led to recognition by the National Science Foundation for a Presidential Award as Montana's Science Teacher of the Year in 1983.

His most cherished award came in 1984, when the University of Montana declared him Distinguished Alumnus.

(end of excerpt)