



### **CALVIN ARNOLD CALTON**

(June 11, 1930 – January 29, 2017)

The oldest of three boys (William Bert and Elmer David) born to Clay and Altha Calton, Cal's young life was filled with friends, card playing and basketball. In high school, the Ten Sleep basketball team won the Wyoming State Championship – it was a team achievement that Cal recalled with pride. Cal graduated from high school in 1948, and attended the South Dakota School of Mines. In 1950, he left school to enlist in the U.S. Air Force. Cal served as an Airman 1st Class at Erding Air Base in Germany until being honorably discharged in 1953. Upon his return to the U.S., Cal enrolled in Eastern Montana College where he studied pre-law going on to earn his Juris Doctorate from the University of Montana. Cal began his career as a lawyer in Missoula before relocating to Billings in 1958.

In 1959, Cal met Frances "Fran" Mae Fortney who became the love of this life. After a six-week courtship, the two were married on Nov. 25, 1959. Shortly afterward, the newlyweds moved to Crosby, N.D., where Cal was appointed Divide County Attorney. Cal and Fran quickly expanded their brood, having five children. Though Cal enjoyed practicing law, his greatest joy was time spent with his wife and kids. He was particularly fond of traveling, and instilled a love of adventure and discovery in his children at an early age. Many summer weekends, the family of seven would pile into a station wagon with simulated wood-grain siding, toss in sleeping bags, a diaper pail and the Sears Ted Williams tent and head for Lake Sacajawea. "Isn't this fun?" dad would say, a grin splitting his face from cheek-to-cheek.

In 1969, the family moved to Billings where Cal served as City Attorney before going back into private practice. Family travel evolved from a tent to a 28-foot motorhome, and the brood expanded to include two dogs and one or two mothers-in-law. Driving the jam-packed motorhome while pulling a pickup and camper behind, dad confidently hit the interstate to tour the West. It was a summer ritual that always included time spent with his beloved brother, Bill and sister-in-law Shirley and family in LA. These were more than family vacations – they were epic adventures marked by miss-steps and comedy. Like the time he drove the motorhome

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down Lombard Street in San Francisco – a feat that still makes his kids wince and laugh at the same time.

As the kids grew older, Cal and Fran downsized and began touring together on a Honda Gold Wing. In all, Cal thoroughly used up two Gold Wings, logging an impressive 350,000-plus miles. Even as recently as last fall, Cal would take his Gold Wing on a favorite ride looping through Blue Creek to Pryor Creek and returning via Old Hardin Road. Cal and Fran also traveled the globe with their best friends, George and Susan Spears. France, Germany, Italy, England, Czechoslovakia, Peru, Mexico, Israel are just a few of the countries they experienced, always choosing to immerse themselves in the local lifestyle vs. taking a scripted tour.

Cal loved life. He was genuine to the core, and treated everyone he ever met with kindness. His big, booming laugh was infectious; he was epitome of "young at heart." Cal was also a deeply spiritual man. Christian Science was the cornerstone of his spiritual life, but he considered himself a Christian above all else. A deep thinker, Cal recognized religion as the way people connect to God, and he never criticized other religions. He hungered for faith and to deepen his relationship with God and actively studied the bible every morning, especially the teachings of Christ. For Cal, these were more than black and white words, the meaning of the words adapted to become relevant to the times. He also understood the bible wasn't written for any specific group of people, but was relevant to all humans. Educated in spiritual matters, he viewed religion as catalyst of man's relationship to God, and government as the catalyst for man's relationship with fellow man on earth. He lived the principle of God first and then family.

Calvin's cremains were scattered in the Big Horn Mountains.

*Submitted by Terry Calton*