

I had the good fortune of having Ralph as a partner for over 30 years, and a friend for over 40 years. It's impossible for words to capture the true essence of this man and the impact he had on me and so many others, but I will try to highlight some of the things that made him so special.

I found it interesting when sharing the news of Ralph's passing, that everyone, from people who knew him well, to people who had never personally met him had the same response. Everyone single one of them replied—**HE WAS A GREAT GUY**. What a legacy to leave. He truly was a great guy. Kind, compassionate, smart, and happy.

Joseph Fort Newton said, "Some people come into our lives, make footprints on our hearts and we are never the same." That certainly pertains to Ralph. We are all so much better for having him in our lives.

I first met Ralph in 1978 when I had just begun my ophthalmology residency at OHSU. Every September we had an Alumni Meeting, where current residents and those that had graduated from the residency gathered for an educational program at OHSU. This was followed by a weekend social gathering at the Inn at the Mountain in Welches. This was a time of fellowship, where old friends could gather, reminisce about their residency days and catch up on each other's lives. It was also a time where new residents like me could meet and visit with alumni. At the Mountain Meeting we enjoyed good food and drink, golf, singing, and the reciting of limericks, some of which Ralph composed. It quickly became apparent that Ralph was the song leader and the curator of limericks.

I knew after this first encounter with Ralph that he would be a friend. As it turned out, he became much more. He was a confidant and an advisor. And being the wonderful physician and a talented surgeon that he was, he became a mentor to me in my practice. He was like a brother to me. He was so well read, and had such a great memory that he was my Siri before Siri came into being. And still today, I will encounter a question and think to myself--I'll ask Ralph—he'll know the answer.

Not only did Ralph & I become great friends, but so did our wives and families. We spent many hours together at Glencoe High School events. We shared many holidays together, rafted the Deschutes, and shared fishing outings. And Marilyn & Ralph & JoAnn & I travelled together to many eye meetings.

As Ralph was growing up in Michigan, he cultivated the first of his many hobbies. He developed an interest in archery, & through hard work and practice become a national champion as a teenager. He also developed a love of music. He had a beautiful bass voice & would go on to sing in the UM Glee Club, the Friars, and the OR Chorale. One of the

things he especially took pleasure in was calling his family and friends on their birthdays and singing Happy Birthday to them.

Ralph received his undergraduate and medical school degrees from the University of Michigan, and he was so proud of his alma mater. He loved everything about it, but especially Wolverine football. We spent many hours every fall discussing football. Those discussions got especially intense on the few occasions when his Wolverines would play my Huskies. None were more intense than in January 2024 when our teams met in the National Championship Game. While the results were painful for me, I'm so glad Ralph got to experience the joy of his team winning the National Championship. **Hail to Victors!**

Ralph had many hobbies and interests. He studied and practiced becoming proficient in all of them. He loved bow hunting and bird hunting and trained his own bird dogs. Fly fishing was a true passion of his. He tied his own flies, was a great reader of the water and was an excellent fly caster. And unlike so many fishermen, Ralph gladly shared his expertise, his flies, and his favorite fishing spots. He loved birding and could identify pretty much any bird he saw or heard. Ralph was very proud of the serene setting of his home and spent many hours tending to and nurturing his beloved rhododendrons and roses. I always knew it was time for me to prune my roses when Ralph showed up with his arms looking like he had been in a cat fight. Travel was another one of Ralph's passions. For him, it was not just the destination he enjoyed, but he loved the planning, and studying the history and the people, the things to see, and the places to eat. Travelling with Ralph was like having your own personal guide.

Ralph enjoyed watching and participating in many sports, but didn't really care much about baseball, except to periodically check to see how the Detroit Tigers were doing. That's until the Hops came to town. Out of a sense of civic pride he and Marilyn became original season ticket holders, and housed players for several years. True to his nature, Ralph spent many hours visiting with his players, finding out about them & their families, and learning about baseball. He learned about the draft, the language of baseball, what all the abbreviations and stats meant, and about the intricacies of the game. He became a walking encyclopedia of baseball and liked to share his new-found knowledge with those around him at Hops games

Ralph was inquisitive and friendly. He never met a person for the first time who left as a stranger. He was genuinely interested in getting to know them and sharing his story with them.

Ralph was the most upbeat, optimistic person I have ever known. His glass was not just half full—it was completely full. And even when he got his final diagnosis and knew his

time was limited, he remained upbeat and positive and tried to reassure and raise the spirits of those around him.

Ralph had a deep sense of family. Any group that he was involved in became like family to him. This included the Chorale, his hunting and fishing buddies—the “Eagle Cap 6,” and the Hillsboro Eye Clinic. He considered his patients family—treating them with respect, kindness, and empathy. He loved all of us partners, not just as work associates, but as individuals and was always interested in how our spouses and children were doing. And Ralph had a special spot in his heart for our clinic employees. They too were like family to him, and he made sure they knew how much he cared for them. Whenever decisions needed to be made in our practice, his first question was “How will this affect our employees?” He looked forward to our annual office Christmas parties and summer picnics to reward them and better get to know them and their families.

But of course, his immediate family was by far the most important to him. He was a devoted husband, father and grandfather. Marilyn was the love of his life & his best friend, and he loved her as much in their 60<sup>th</sup> year of marriage as he did in their 1<sup>st</sup>. He was so proud of her civic involvement, her accomplishments, and all the awards & accolades she received. He often said he was just “**basking in Marilyn’s reflected glow.**”

Ralph was a **girl dad** before that term became popular. He spent many hours, nights and weekends involved in his girls’ school and extracurricular activities. And he was so proud of all they accomplished.

When his daughters married, he welcomed their husbands as his sons. He loved each of them dearly, and was happy, as he said, to finally have the estrogen in his household diluted.

Ralph was a doting grandfather. He loved each of his grandchildren’s unique personalities and the hobbies and interests they pursued and spent many hours enjoying their activities with them.

Ralph especially enjoyed having the whole family together for holiday celebrations and looked forward every year to their week in Black Butte.

Oliver Sachs, a noted English neurologist & author, as he was nearing the end of his life, asked himself 2 questions. Did my life make a difference and was I loved. Ralph certainly made a difference. To his profession with his skill and knowledge. To his community with his generosity. And to his family and friends with his love and guidance. And he certainly was loved by all who knew him.

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