

## Barton Lee Robinson, 76

Barton Lee Robinson, 76, passed away Oct. 21, 2008, at Sacred Heart Medical Center in Spokane, Wash., from liver cancer.

Lee was born Sept. 17, 1932, to Harry Barton and Violet Yockey Robinson in Hawk Springs, Wyo.

Lee attended the first two grades of school in LaGrange, Wyo.

Due to the Depression, drought, grasshoppers and crop failures, Harry Barton moved his family to Idaho. In May 1940, they left Wyoming in a Model A Ford, pulling a four-wheeled trailer with their belongings and six children; Lee was the next to youngest.

When they went over the Continental Divide, the Model A was not adequate for the load, and Violet and the kids had to walk. It took five days to get to Sandpoint with the best road via Helena, Mont.

The family found 160 acres with a house, barn and out-buildings in Highland Flats area near Naples and bought it for \$1000. The family thought they had found heaven.

Later that year, Lee's married sister and her husband and another brother joined them.

Lee attended school at Highland Flats School through seventh grade, at which time the school was closed. He went to eighth grade at Naples and graduated from Bonners Ferry High School, in 1950. Lee was an outstanding boxer in high school.

After graduation, he worked in the woods and sawmill for Jeff McAvoy and then at Kootenai Valley Creamery.

Lee's high school sweetheart Donna Lannigan graduated in 1951. Her parents then



moved to Caldwell. Lee and Donna were engaged, and Lee followed.

They were married in her parents' home on July 21, 1951.

Lee worked various jobs, but they both missed the mountains and trees. So the couple put their belongings in their 1946 Hudson and returned to Boundary County.

Lee went back to work for McAvoy until winter shut them out of the woods. In February 1952, he took a job at Safeway, which was where Larson's is now.

Within a few weeks, they asked if he would like to learn to cut meat, and he said he would try it; it became his trade for 43 years. There was no boxed beef then. Beef came in full quarters, hogs in halves and the turkeys at Thanksgiving had to be cleaned.

On Lee's 20th birthday in 1952, Lee and Donna welcomed a daughter, LeAnne. Daughter Sandra was born in April 1954 and Leslie followed in September 1958.

On Oct. 1, 1958, Lee quit Safeway and went to work for Don Beatty, who had purchased the Kootenai Valley Grocery, where the Panhandle Restaurant is now. Lee managed the store and cut meat. After two years, Beatty closed the grocery and moved in Dan's Cafe from next door.

Lee then got a job as meat market manager in Soap Lake, Wash., where he moved his family on Nov. 1, 1960. The store was called Jack's Bargain Barn and was later bought

by John Asker who named it John's Thrift.

Lee again missed Idaho, and when his youngest daughter graduated from high school in 1976, he came back to Highland Flats. He had purchased 10 acres of the original property bought in 1940 from his brother.

Lee lived in a tent during one of the wettest summers in Boundary County and started building a home. Though not finished, Lee and his wife moved in on Sept. 1, 1976.

Later that month, M and M grocery store owned by Les Rogers offered Lee the job of meat market manager. Lee took the job and later the store name was changed to Excel Foods.

In 1982, Safeway bought it and shortly after closed it. Lee did not want to move and leave his home in the woods so he and Donna leased a space at the rear of the Panhandle Cafe and opened Lee's Market on Sept. 13, 1982. Lee did most of the remodeling including building a walk-in freezer-cooler.

In the fall of 1991, Lee became ill and in June of 1992 he was diagnosed with Lupus. Lee kept working until he sold the store to Hans and Vera Fuchs in April 1995.

After that Lee worked for Boundary Trading, when it first opened and then part time at Coast to Coast Truevalue until Jim Chubb closed it.

Lee hunted in his younger years and always liked to creek fish. He did woodworking, crossword puzzles and read most anything non-fiction,

Lee was instrumental in starting Jaycees in Bonners Ferry in the mid 1950s. He also belonged to Jaycees in

Soap Lake.

During his daughters' school years, Lee was active in PTA, Band Boosters and Camp Fire activities. He was on the board for the annual Suds and Sun Celebration in Soap Lake and chairman of the library board when a new library was built. Lee was president of the Highland Flats Water Association at the time of his passing.

He is survived by his wife of 57 years, daughters LeAnne (Brad) Hunter and Leslie (Ric) Carlson, all of Spokane, Wash., and Sandy (Chuck) Hays of Des Moines, Wash.; grandchildren, Erik (Sarah) White and Kristin (Nathan) Masinter of Spokane; step-grandchildren Emily (Jon) Rappe of St. Louis Park, Minn., Tyler (Kimber) Hunter and Hillary Hunter, Matthew Hays, and Joe Carlson, all of Spokane, Chris (Arika) Hays of Monroe, Wash., and Ann (Joe) Smith of Snoqualmie Wash; great-grandchildren Adam, Declan, Brady, Lydia and Samuel; step great-grandchildren Kyla, Makenna, Dante and Izabela and baby Smith due in March; a brother, Wayne Robinson of Bonners Ferry; a sister, Ginny (Dell) Whetsler of Bakersfield, Calif.; and many nieces, nephews and cousins.

Lee was preceded in death by his parents; sisters Lois Mahler, Harriet Voss and an infant sister; and brothers Gene, Alvin and Pete.

Lee has been cremated, and a memorial service will be held in the spring at the United Methodist Church.

The family suggests memorials be made to Shriners Hospital for Children, 911 West 5th Ave., Spokane, Wash., 99204.