

Bonnors Ferry Herald, Wednesday, November 21, 2007

Elmer D. Smith

Longtime Bonnors Ferry, Idaho resident Elmer D. Smith, 84, passed away Friday, November 9, 2007 in Spokane, Washington. Elmer was born April 6, 1923 in Kahlotus, Washington to George W. and Mabel Smith. He began farming in Bonnors Ferry in 1947. Elmer married Audrey Wishart on April 10, 1950 in Walla Walla, Washington. Elmer and Audrey lived on Pine Island in District One until 1975 when they moved over on the highway. They farmed in District One for 52 years before moving to Spokane to be closer to family. Elmer and Audrey were married for 55 years. At the time of his death, Elmer resided with his daughter Renae Wedlake and her family. They cared for Elmer tirelessly and helped give him a positive quality of life in his final years.



Elmer was preceded in death by his wife, Audrey, an infant daughter, Lucille Ann, his parents, his brother, Pug Smith, and sister, Grace Jesse. He is survived by his children: Denise (Terry) Toennis, Shari (Keith) Hinman, Renae (Bill) Wedlake, Sharlene (Fred) Gentry, Ross (Patty) Smith, and George (Nancy) Smith. His grandchildren include: Joelle and Gavin Toennis, Rochelle and Melissa Hinman, Riley and Kalli Wedlake, Eric and Andrew Gentry, Jeremy Derhiem, and Mitchell and Timothy Smith. He is also survived by six sisters: Frances Wright, Margie Ballard, Lilly Figgins, Shari Richmond, LaVonne Reser, and Louise Andrews and numerous nieces and nephews.

Elmer was active in a variety of organizations throughout his life. These included: The Boundary County and Idaho Farm Bureau, Moyie Shrine Club, Bonnors Ferry #43 Masonic Lodge, Trinity Lutheran Church, Lion's Club, and the Republican Party. He served the Farm Bureau on the local and state levels, and he and Audrey were honored to receive the Idaho Farm Bureau's President's Award. Elmer, a "die-hard" Republican, served on the Central Committee in Boundary County. He was well known for placing political signs all over the county. Because of his political interests, he developed a collection of over 200 "Republican" elephants. He fulfilled one of his dying wishes when he gave his collection to the Boundary County Historical Museum on September 1, 2007. His second dying wish was to install a sixty-foot flagpole on Pine Island in District One. The flagpole accommodates an 8 by 12 foot flag and is spotlighted to insure its visibility at night. Elmer was a very patriotic man who wanted to leave a visible reminder to generations to come of his pride in America and Bonnors Ferry. He also believed in the importance of the American farmer, so it is fitting that this flagpole be on Pine Island, which was the center of his farming operation.

Elmer believed in hard work and in helping others. He brought grain from the town of Bonnors Ferry to Pine Island on a hand made raft during the flood of '47 to save other's grain from total loss. He plowed endlessly during the winter of '68 to help keep train lines and roads open. He donated all of his hay to ranchers in South Dakota during a prolonged drought. The fruits of Elmer's strong work ethic can also be seen in the many accomplishments of his children. Elmer's grandchildren thoroughly enjoyed his sense of humor and stories he shared of his childhood.

Funeral Service will be held at the Spring of the Living Water Free Methodist Church at 2:00 p.m. Saturday, November 24, 2007. The church is located at 6957 Rd. 2D, Bonnors Ferry, Idaho. Interment will follow at the Grandview Cemetery. The family asks that memorial gifts be given in Elmer's name to the Shriners Hospital for Crippled Children, 911 W. 5th Avenue, Spokane, WA 99204.