



Arthur John Noonan

November 24, 1951 - September 17, 2022

Arthur John “Art” Noonan, one of six children of Edward J. and Sara L. Noonan, was born in Butte on November 24, 1951. He passed away of natural causes in the Mining City unexpectedly on Saturday, September 17th.

Art loved Montana, was dedicated to public service and was a strong proponent and believer in American Democracy. He spent 40 years in public service making Montana a better place, particularly for the people of Butte. He grew up on Whitman Avenue, attended St. John’s School, and graduated from Butte Central High School in 1970.

Art honed his trademark speech and debate skills at a young age. In his early twenties, he was welcomed to address several legislative sessions where he paced up and down the center aisle of both House and Senate in period costume as Thomas Jefferson, extolling the virtues of the Declaration of Independence and the US Constitution.

His dedication to serving community and passion for social justice likely started in 1971 when Art received statewide publicity for being the first young person to register to vote in Silver Bow County after the law changed in 1969 lowering the voting age from 21 to 19.

In the decades that followed, Art had a distinguished career in government

and public service. Art worked on the staff of former U.S. Rep. Pat Williams for many years, focusing on natural resources, wilderness issues, US Forest Service and the US Park Service. He was most proud of helping protect Yellowstone Park from geothermal development and creating the Lee Metcalf Wilderness and naming it for a great Montana hero of his. While with Williams, he served as a staffer on the House Interior Committee. For several years in Washington, Art worked on wilderness issues for Montana's senior Senator John Melcher. After returning to Pat Williams' DC staff, Art ended his Congressional career in Williams' Butte field office.

Back in Montana from 2005 to 2011, Art served three terms as a Democratic State Representative from House District 73 in Butte. In 2007 Art was the Democratic Floor Leader who helped shepherd through the agenda of Democratic Governor Brian Schweitzer, who later named Art as Deputy Director of Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks from 2009 to 2011. While a Legislator, Art was also the Executive Director of the Montana Democratic Party from 2007-2009.

Art also served on the Butte-Silver Bow Planning Board and the Montana Supreme Court Commission on Practices. In other posts, Art was executive director of the AWARE Foundation and worked for NorthWestern Energy advising the company on governmental affairs from 2012 until his retirement in 2017.

At the time of his death, Art was running for House District 73 to once again represent and fight for the great people of Butte. At the time of his death Art helped create a new group, the Blue Collar Corridor Society, and was working on a society rally scheduled for October 4 at the Finlen where Pat Williams would be honored. The event will proceed and also recognize Art.

The Noonans have lived in Butte since the 1880s and come from good Irish

stock. It has been said Art had the knack to disagree vehemently without being disagreeable which is a true Irish trait. At lively dinner table discussions Art's parents, Ed and Sal, taught their six children public speaking and the importance of understanding social issues and learning about history. Those lucky enough to share a table with Art over the years know this is something he carried with him throughout his life.

Art was contemplative, quick witted and loved the art of conversation and healthy debate. When he spoke, you listened. It didn't matter the subject, he was articulate on any topic and an orator for the ages. His keen sense of humor, ability to tell a great story, and his unique perspective will be missed by all who knew him. He said and truly lived these words, "Be better than where you came from. Be better than those who oppose you. And, be better than you believe possible."

Montana has lost a poet, a diplomat, a guru of our wilderness places and a warrior for blue collar labor. Butte has lost a man-at-arms who never forgot his home community. We have all lost a piece of "our" Montana.

In his final campaign, Art produced a series of unique, limited edition campaign posters. One he treasured and passed on to some special friends was printed in black and white and was simply a large campaign button on which he printed the message "Give a Damn." Those words are both a remembrance and, in typical Art Noonan fashion, a call-to-arms.

Art, we are all better for having known you.

Art was preceded in death by his parents, and brothers Ed and Larry. He is survived by sisters Winifred Noonan, Sara Paul, brother Mark, nephews Pat Noonan, Dan Paul, Bryan Noonan, and nieces Andrea Bottorff, Kate Williamsen, and Kelley Paul. Art loved several cats throughout his life, and his

most recent buddy, Skinny Cat, will miss him dearly.

A family gathering is being planned for a future date. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be given to the Montana Democratic Party.

Tribute Wall

DY

“ *The world today needs more of Art, not less. May we all carry out our discourse in a manner that would serve his spirit. It was an honor and a pleasure Art. - Dustin de Yong*

Dustin de Yong - September 26, 2022 at 05:42 PM

DH

“ *Dan Hickey lit a candle in memory of Arthur John Noonan*



Dan Hickey - September 25, 2022 at 10:23 PM

DH

Art was a legend in all the best ways. He made you laugh, but more than that, he acknowledged your value. He listened as much as he shared. He was the prototype of the Energizer Bunny. The world will move a little slower tonight, there may be a few less how sa goins, an definitely a few less laughs. He will be missed by his wonderful sisters, Winnie and Sara, and brother Mark. All great St. John's Eagles. But us average Joes and Beth's, have lost a guardian angel, so that the government would help it's people.

Dan Hickey - September 25, 2022 at 10:31 PM

MR

“ *I worked with Art in Pat Williams' DC office in the early 1980's. He was an old school Montana Democrat who loved the wilderness and loved the people who worked in Montana. He will be sorely missed by those who worked with him! Mary Wescott (Walker) Riser*

Mary Riser - September 25, 2022 at 05:40 PM

MK

“ *M.J. KELLO sent a virtual gift in memory of Arthur John Noonan*



M.J. KELLO - September 25, 2022 at 04:01 PM

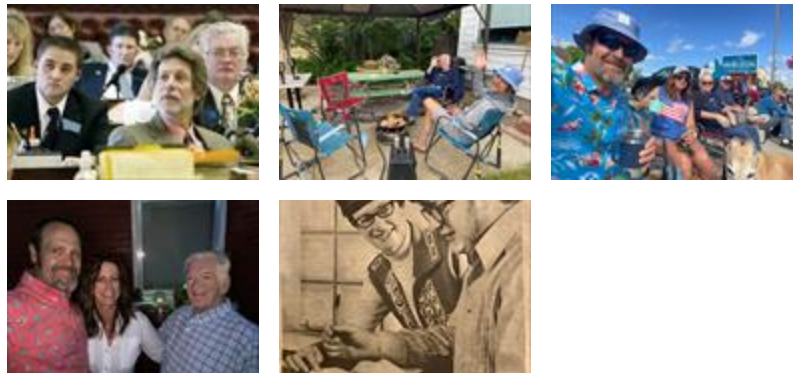
MI

“ *I am so very sorry for your family. I remember Art as one of the most engaging and wonderful man. He was truly one of a kind and he will be missed.*

Mitzi - September 24, 2022 at 11:17 PM



“ *20 files added to the album Memories Album*



Wayrynen-Richards Funeral Home - September 23, 2022 at 04:12 PM