



Joseph Steven "Joe" Jaksha

November 20, 1926 - March 3, 2023

Joseph (Joe) Jaksha was born November 20, 1926 to Joseph and Christina (Oklesan) Jaksha in Butte, MT. Joe passed away peacefully at the age of 96 on March 3, 2023.

Dad was raised in McQueen on Yew Street. A few years after his mom passed away in 1935, Dad's dad was unable to care for him and his brothers Frank and Bill and the boys were sent to the St. Joseph's Orphanage in Helena, MT where they stayed until his dad remarried. Dad attended Holy Savior in McQueen, graduating from Boy's Central. In March of 1945, Dad was drafted into the Army and reported to Ft. Douglas in Utah. Dad was sent to Japan at the end of the war during reconstruction. After discharge from the Army, Dad worked on the BA&P railroad and later worked construction in Montana and California. Dad was always proud of helping to build the early married student housing for MSU that ran along West College in Bozeman. Whenever we drove by them, Dad would tell the story of how he and a friend helped build them. Dad eventually worked for the Anaconda Company in the Berkley Pit as a shovel operator until it closed. Dad married Jean Schara in 1952 later divorcing in 1964.

In August of 1988, the Walsh Apartments, which was an apartment building Dad was living in at the time, caught fire. Dad received Red Cross commendation for saving other tenants by pounding on doors and then going

back into the building bringing an injured resident out. Dad received burns from returning to the burning building. This, however, wasn't the first time Dad had put himself in harm's way to help others. While in boot camp and during instructions on how to handle grenades, as one was being passed around to inspect, a soldier next to him pulled the pin. Without thinking twice, Dad grabbed the grenade and threw it saving his fellow soldiers. Dad received written commendation for this.

Dad was an avid hunter, hunting well into his eighties. He was never a road hunter. He liked to walk the mountains in search for the elusive elk or deer. Dad loved to fish as well. Once Dad camped on the Boulder River with his daughters, sons-in-law and grandchildren and had hiked up to a high-country meadow. On the way back, they fished a creek along the trail. Dad kept catching fish and each time, his son-in-law, Les told him he should toss it back because it was a long walk to carry them back. But, no, Dad was determined to carry his fish back on the stringer. That night we had a dinner of fried fish over the fire.

Dad was a rockhound at heart and enjoyed looking for agates, gold panning and looking for petrified wood. Dad's garage was lined with crates of rocks with barely enough room to fit his truck. Dad even had a rock saw and grinder set up in the basement of his house where he would cut and polish the rocks. Even after moving to his little apartment, he would polish rocks that had been cut. Dad didn't travel much, but he made it a point to take his trips to Windover, Jackpot or Idaho to play the slot machines. Dad would sign up for the three-day flights or bus trips twice a year whenever they came up. Dad also enjoyed his yearly trips over either Thanksgiving or Christmas to visit his daughter Chris in California. Special treats for Dad were getting Povitica from Chris and Sandy or pasties and going to the Peking Noodle Parlor.

Dad had a passion for construction and building. After the Walsh Apartments

fire, Dad purchased a house on Grand Avenue in Butte. The house became a hobby house for Dad, and he had great plans for the house. The first thing he did was dig out half his basement and pour concrete walls and floor all by hand. He also relocated the stairs to the basement and built his prized sauna in the basement. Eventually, Dad remodeled both bedrooms and the bathroom. He had plans to remodel the kitchen, but never got that far before deciding to sell the house and move into the Columbus Plaza. Dad helped his daughter Sandy and son-in-law Les build three houses over the years taking numerous pictures that he loved to show off. Dad also helped Faye build her house at the "homestead" as Dad called it. He loved going out to the homestead not only to help with the build but especially helping with the cows. He loved watching new construction and checking it out. Dad said he always learned new ways to do things.

Dad always wanted to learn the Slovenian language as both his parents were from Slovenia. At one time, he even purchased books to try to learn it. What Dad could remember, he loved to share it with his great granddaughter Mya who remembered some of the words for a while when she was younger. Dad also liked showing his great grandchildren his rocks and telling them what they were and where they could be found. But the one thing Dad really loved to do was share his homemade wine. Dad had a small wine barrel set up for making wine in the basement of his house. Each year he would order white grapes because they were the sweetest. He would nurture the wine, testing it to make sure it was sweet enough and then eventually bottle it. There was never a ton of wine, but it would last until the next year. One thing for sure, his wine had a little kick to it. One story Dad loved to tell about his wine making adventures was when he was visited by the Feds in the late 50's or early 60's. One year Dad had ordered too many grapes and they were checking up on him to see if he was selling the wine out of the basement of the apartment building he owned. Granted, Dad had two very large wine barrels in the

basement, but he never sold the wine.

Dad had a kind smile and found happiness in simple things in life. When he smiled, he always had a little twinkle in his eye.

Dad is survived by his daughters Sandy Fischer (Les) of Vail, AZ and Chris Lepore (Bruce) of Hayward, CA; grandchildren Alexandria Goffena (Nate) of Roundup, MT, Annie Ross (Adam Williams) of Hudson, WI, Bill Fischer (Wendy) of Bowie, MD and Stephen Lepore of Southern California; great grandchildren Erik and Ellie Goffena; Mya, Aylah, Keira, Kenna, Kora and Sofia Ross; Pat (Mira), John, Theresa, Hannah, William, Mary, Pete and Emma Fischer; and, Sophia and Scout Lepore; and, great, great grandson Karl Fischer. He is also survived by brother, John Jaksha (Sandy) of Butte, MT and sister, Mary Gutkowski of Denver, CO as well as many nieces and nephews. Dad is survived by a special friend Faye Marjama. Dad is preceded in death by his parents; infant son, Steven Jaksha; grandson, Eric Fischer; brothers, Frank and Bill Jaksha; Uncle, Steven Jaksha; brother-in-law, Ray Gutkowski; and, nephew, Tim Gutkowski. Dad is also preceded in death by a very close and special person in his life, Leona Peltama and friend, Jan Marjama.

Special thanks to Amber and all the staff at Beehive Homes in Butte, MT and Easter Seal Hospice for the care and kindness they showed Dad during his stay at Beehive Homes.

Services will be held at a later date. At Dad's request, he will be interred at the Veterans section of Mountain View Cemetery in Butte. In lieu of flowers, please donate to a charity of your choosing.

Cemetery Details

Mountain View Cemetery

3910 Harrison Avenue
Butte, MT 59701

Events

Details are pending.

Tribute Wall

SA

“ 8 files added to the album Dad



Sandy - March 11, 2023 at 12:20 PM



“ *My thoughts and prayers to Faye and all of Joe's family.
He was one of the nicest guys.
I first met him with Leona at the Sportsman Bar.
May his memories hold dear in your hearts.
Rest in peace Joe..*

Janice Muniz

Janice Muniz - March 10, 2023 at 03:17 AM

CL

“ 4 files added to the tribute wall



Chris Lepore - March 09, 2023 at 05:52 PM

CP

“ I never met Joe but have enjoyed hearing stories about him from his sister Mary over the years. What a great smile Joe leaves behind for all his friends and family to remember him by. Hugs to Mary, Johnny and all the rest of their family. Cleo Postle

Cleo Postle - March 08, 2023 at 12:55 PM

SF

“ 34 files added to the album Dad



Sandy Fischer - March 07, 2023 at 05:10 PM