



Neal Stewart Egan

April 10, 1935 - July 19, 2019

Neal Stewart Egan, a long-time Butte resident, passed away at 84 on July 19th, 2019. This Butte Hall of Famer was beloved not only by his friends and family but by everyone whose life he touched. Born in Minturn, CO on April 10th, 1935 to Dr. Irenus Stewart Egan and Florence (Egan) Shields RN, CRNA, Neal traveled with his family and lived in Honolulu, Anchorage, Paradise Valley, and Livingston before the age of nine. Following his father's death in 1941, and after his mother received her certification as a nurse-anesthetist, he and his mother settled in Butte.

Neal would go on to attend St. Patrick's Catholic school and Boy's Central High School, where he was a three-sport athlete in football, basketball, and track and field. During his impressive athletic career for the Maroons, Egan won state championships in basketball and football. He was a first-team all-state selection in 1952 and played in the 1953 East-West Shrine Game where he started at left tackle for the West team, winning 20-0. Egan attended Montana State College on an academic and athletic scholarship where he studied Chemical Engineering. For his academic and athletic achievements, he was selected by Chemical Engineering News as an All-American in 1954 and 1955, and a Sigma Chi All-American. He was a proud Bobcat and, in 1956, was a member of the National Championship team. He was selected, along with his teammates, into the Montana State University's Hall of Fame in 1995.

Following graduation in 1958 with a chemical engineering degree he began

his career working at Thiokol Corporation. After working a year, Egan entered the Marines with dreams of becoming an aviator and astronaut. While fulfilling his dream to fly and completing flight training, he was simply too tall to become an astronaut. Following Officer's Candidate School, he returned to Montana to marry Phyllis Rae Pendergrass on December 28th, 1959. The newlyweds settled in Pensacola, Florida where their first daughter was born, Kathleen (Broere). In 1961 they welcomed their second child, Shaun. Following his departure from the marines in 1962 as a Captain, Neal and Phyllis welcomed their third child, Peggy in 1964. Neal again went to work for Thiokol where he worked on solid rocket propulsion systems for the LGM-30 Minuteman ICBM system and the early Gemini space program. In 1969, after a short stint with Honeywell in Minneapolis, Egan settled his family in Centerville, Indiana where he worked for AVCO Precision Products Division on the design and development of ballistics and ordinance for the military, and also managed the design, construction, and testing of hot gas generator magneto-hydrodynamic (MHD) applications, which ultimately lead him back home to Butte. Wanting to change his career path, he pursued his master's degree and PhD in Air Pollution and Industrial Hygiene at the University of Cincinnati, receiving his masters in 1977. Following the completion of his PhD coursework, he commuted to Lansing, Michigan to work on the XM1 tank, the prototype for the M1 Abrams Tank, commonly used in our modern military. Committed to changing the direction of his career and wanting to work on alternative technologies that would improve energy efficiency and the environment, he moved back to Butte in 1977 as the Senior Engineer for MSE Technology Applications Inc, and finally the Mike Mansfield Advanced Technology Center to work on MHD Technology to improve the efficiency and reduce the pollution of Coal-Fired Power Plants. After a remarkable career and numerous accolades, he retired as Senior Vice President in 2010.

In addition to being an athlete, a Marine and an engineer, Neal was a teacher. Whether you knew him for a little while or a lifetime he taught by example;

strong values, principals and character. He taught respect for others while never sacrificing respect for yourself. This giant of a man taught us all that you are strongest when you show compassion for others. He taught us patience for all things except injustice and the judgmental. He taught us what it was to be a gentleman and a gentle man. It was not his wish that we carry forward these values – it was his expectation.

Neal and Phyllis loved to travel throughout Montana and the world. They were frequent attendees at high school rodeos, team-roping's, wrestling matches, and Butte Central and MSU football games. In 2001 Neal and Phyllis found a piece of property on Flathead Lake near Bigfork and built Phyllis's dream home. Just as Phyllis had hoped, it would, over the course of many years, become a place of frequent special gatherings and holidays for what had become their very large extended family. The door was always open for friends and family.

In 2007, after 50-years of love, three children, and 7 grandchildren, he suddenly lost the love of his life, Phyllis. They loved their life together and laughed often.

After Phyllis' death, he met and fell in love with Frances (Fran) Doran. He would often say he was lucky to have loved two women in his life and to have been loved deeply by both. Fran and Neal became inseparable and were frequently seen in Butte's hotspots dining with friends and family, sharing a laugh, a drink or both. He and Fran loved to travel, having traveled to China, Africa twice, Mexico, Greece, Turkey, and throughout Europe. They took months-long road trips to visit friends and family across the U.S. and Canada. They had just started a West Coast road trip when he passed away. He was lucky to live the rest of his life with Fran. He enjoyed being active in the community, attending sporting events, and his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. In 2012 Fran and Neal worked to remodel Butte's first Skyscraper, the Hirbour Tower, which is where they called home for the rest of Neal's life.

Neal is preceded in death by his beloved wife, Phyllis, his parents, his half-sister Monica Egan, his dear friends Mark Doran, Stu Ryan, Bob and Kay Warila, John Monroe, and Bob Russell. He is survived by his children Kathleen (Ross) Broere of Cut Bank, Shaun (Anne) Egan of Denver, and Peggy Egan of Bigfork; a brother-in-law, Gary Pendergrass of Lakeside; sisters-in-law Bobbi Jessop and Kay Monroe of Cut Bank; and grandchildren Michael Beers of Missoula; Quinn, Conor, Corrigan, and Liam Egan of Denver; Egan and Ryan Black and Jeff and Scott Broere of Cut Bank; great-grandchildren Madolyn, Payson, and Eden Black; cousins Valerie Lerkind (Bill Nelson) and Denise Black (Bob) and 8 nephews and their families. He is also survived by his adopted "under-His-wing children" Doug and Linda Petty and their children Tessa, Gus, and Ben of Seattle; Marcy (Lynch) and Brian Gallup and their daughter Brilee of East Glacier; and Angela and Joe McGrath and their children Payton and Grace of Butte; Tonya (Dressel) Doran and her children Jackson, Jesse, and Brady of Seattle; Jerome and Darla McCarthy and their children Devin, Madison, and Ryan of Butte; and countless others he mentored throughout his life. He loved widely and he was widely loved. Neal to some and Papa to others, he will be sorely missed by all.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Neal S. and Phyllis P. Egan Scholarship Fund at MSU Alumni Foundation, Butte Central, and Friends of the Mother Lode Theater: Egan Memorial, C/O Fran Doran, 1 E Broadway, Butte Montana 59701.

Cemetery Details

Holy Cross Cemetery

4700 Harrison Avenue
Butte, MT 59701

Previous Events

Service

AUG 9. 11:00 AM (MT)

Immaculate Conception Catholic Church
Corner of Caldonia and Western Street
Butte, MT 59701
bccn@diocesehelena.org

Tribute Wall

SM

“ *i am SO saddened to hear of Neal's passing. He struck me as a man of uncommon character. I can't recall a time whenever i saw him that he wasn't smiling. I will miss him.*
My most sincere condolences to his children, grand and great grandchildren and Fran. May God keep you all in the palm of his hand.

stacey mulholland - August 08, 2019 at 04:34 PM

HL

“ *It is difficult to say good-bye to such a gentleman whose intelligence and kindness touched us all. We wish our sincere condolences to Fran and all the family. We know you will miss Neal and hope the memories of him will bring you a smile over the years to come. -*
Herb and Virginia Leuprecht

Herbert Leuprecht - August 08, 2019 at 01:44 PM

RW

“ *It was an honor to work with Neal when I managed the EPA oversight of the Mine Waste Technology Program. True Butte hero. Impressive gentleman!*
Roger Wilmoth

Roger Wilmoth - August 08, 2019 at 12:30 PM

PS

“ *What a wonderful and caring man . Always a gentleman, so glad to have been in Neil and Frans company while I was visiting in Butte .*
Prayers Pamm Silvers

pamm silver - August 07, 2019 at 06:34 PM



“ *A lifetime friend who was a friend to all, could not have had an enemy.
May you rest in peace and stay clear of Old faithful!*

Fraser MacDonald - August 07, 2019 at 09:49 AM



“ *2 files added to the album Memories Album*



Wayrynen-Richards Funeral Home - August 06, 2019 at 10:23 PM