



## Russell Earl Sorensen

December 11, 1946 - February 22, 2021

Sidney native and Butte resident, Russ Sorensen (74) passed away quietly at home, February 22, 2021 from cancer.

Born in Sidney, MT on December 11, 1946 to Leslie and Jewel Gabrielson Sorensen, Russ began life on the family farm in the Ridgelawn community north of town. The fourth child in a family of six, Russ was actively engaged in everything from kitchen chores, to gardening and field work. He was an avid fisherman and hunter with his father and brothers during that time.

Russ attended the neighborhood schools of Ridgelawn and Hardy schools through eighth grade. He joined older siblings, George, Gary, and Marianne in riding the bus into town to attend Sidney High School, graduating in 1964. Before Christmas of that year, wouldn't you know it, Uncle Sam provided his first bus ride across the state to Butte and the military induction center where he joined the United States Air Force.

San Antonio, Texas and Biloxi, Mississippi were jumping off points to a whole new world for a quiet young man from rural Montana. Technical training positioned him for radar work, with a 2 1/2-year assignment at Camp Maiden north of Lewistown, MT. July 1968 found him headed for Danang, Vietnam to be stationed at Monkey Mountain as a "scope dope," monitoring military air traffic of all sorts. He received an honorable discharge in 1968.

Utilizing the GI Bill, Russ attended Montana State University in Bozeman, obtaining a BS in Range Management. Upon graduation, he was hired by the Bureau of Land Management, attended Lands and Minerals School in Phoenix, AZ and received placement in Anchorage, Alaska as a Realty Specialist in the District Office.

“The Last Frontier” of Alaska was a fine place for a young single guy to engage in the great outdoors of the 49th state. With many other young single Bureau employees, Russ made the most of cross-country skiing, hiking, canoeing, camping and fishing. An eye-popping moment for him was “combat fishing” on the Kenai river during the opening hours of salmon season! Quite different than on the banks of the Yellowstone river in eastern Montana.

As a Realty Specialist, Russ was heavily involved in a wide variety of land actions that took him into challenging and interesting situations throughout Alaska. He built solid relationships with co-workers as well as folks he processed claims for. He paid attention to detail and worked hard to get the job done right.

In 1977 Russ traveled to Montana to attend the wedding of his brother Bruce in Belt, Montana. He met a sister of his new sister-in-law. Wouldn't you know it, he married the sister, Debbie Urick, in Anchorage, AK on May 6, 1978. They made their home along the Alaska Pipeline outside of Glennallen in the interior. On a February night in 1979 when the thermometer dipped to -54°, Russ and Debbie welcomed twin sons Andrew and Benjamin into their home. Summer of that year, saw them return to Montana where Russ transferred to the Butte District Bureau of Land Management office.

The family moved over the divide to Pipestone, where they lived until 1997 and Russ continued working for the Bureau. He commuted nearly 14 years

over Homestake Pass and was thankful to not be involved in any accidents. His faithful little blue VW bug kept going come snow or cold. He just pulled on the Carhart coveralls and pulled out the window scraper to see where he was going. Russ was a proud father to Andy and Ben, always involved in outside projects and activities with them. He encouraged and followed them in school, 4-H, church, sports and community activities. Later when the boys completed college, married and had families, he was mighty thankful and proud of their accomplishments, still supporting them as he could.

When the boys graduated high school, Russ and Debbie moved to Dillon, MT where Russ was involved in the complex Crow Boundaries Settlement Act. After many challenging years, Russ was able to work with a team that brought that endeavor to final closure. With that project tied up, Russ transferred to the Carlsbad, NM Bureau of Land Management where he retired as Branch Chief in the Oil and Gas Division.

Returning to Montana, Russ and Debbie moved to Great Falls and then to Butte in 2014 where they have resided since. In the last years Russ has found strength in his faith and family. He's especially enjoyed family, neighbors and wouldn't you know it, the delightful grandchildren in Montana and Canada.

Russ is survived by his wife of 42 years, Debbie of the family home. Son Andy of Calgary, Alberta; wife Kerry, daughters Ayla and Taylor and step-children, Katlyn, Jordan and Lauryn Schimke. Son Ben of Butte, wife Cerissa, and children, Kane, Lilly, Max and Hugo.

Brothers, George (Marilyn) and Bruce (Jinx); sisters, Marianne and Twyla (Dave) Ruffie.

brothers-in-law; Gary Gliko and Rick (Barb) Urick; sisters-in-law, Jinx (Bruce) Sorensen and Becky Murray. 14 nephews and nieces. Seven great-nephews and nieces Preceding Russ in death were his parents, Les and Jewel

Sorensen; in-laws, Tony and Edna Urick; brother, Gary Sorensen; brother-in-law Jerry Gliko and nephew Drew Murray.

Because of current Covid restrictions and border regulations, memorial services will be held mid-summer in Butte and Great Falls. Cremation and taken place and burial will take place in the Big Willow Cemetery in the Highwood Mountains east of Belt. Memorials may be made to Mercy Ships, Smile Train, Faith Lutheran Church of the charity of your choice.

Many thanks are extended to the great medical folks at St. James Hospital, ICU and ER; Dr. Chamberlain, Dr. Readal, Dr. Hull, Dr. Marwan Massough, Dr. Dennis Dietrich, Dr. Pullman, Dr. Raiser, the staff of Senior Solutions, staff of Continental Divide Home Health Care, family and friends around us and throughout the state. Wouldn't you know it, we're mighty grateful for you all. Express condolences at [www.wayrynen-richards.com](http://www.wayrynen-richards.com).

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

SEP 2. 10:00 AM (MT)

Wayrynen-Richards Funeral Home  
1800 Florence Ave  
Butte, MT 59701  
(406) 723-3221  
<https://wayrynen-richards.com/>

# Tribute Wall

TS

“ *Deb and family,*

*We send all the hugs and prayers possible to comfort during your time of loss. Keep happy memories close and Russ will live forever in your hearts.*

*Tom and Anita Scheetz  
Sidney, MT*

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**Tom Scheetz** - March 12, 2021 at 10:00 AM



MarynGordy  
Blomquist

“ *Deb, boys and extended family,*

*We have very fond memories of Russ and your family through Gary and Rachelle Sorensen. Also, a special memory is when you came back for the cancer walk in Sidney. You are an amazing family and we are grateful to have known you all! Our prayers are with you for the next few months as you say goodbye. Love you!*

*Diana O'Connor, MaryLynn & Gordy Blomquist, Michelle O'Connor and Karen & Jonathan Myers*

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**MarynGordy Blomquist** - March 05, 2021 at 06:54 PM

SG

“ Dear Debbie, Boys now men, and extended family  
We lost another very special man! My prayer is that God will be very near you all as He helps you through losing Russ. I think of us having Circle at your house Debbie and treasure those memories with Russ showing up at the end of our meeting. He was such a good person to just visit with and I enjoyed him. I think our longest and best visit to cover all topics of interest was when you were leaving the condo to move to Butte. As much as I ,and all of Faith Lutheran, hated losing you two, I could see your reasoning and blessed your decision. So I grieve with you. As a widow, I am available for those late nite sessions when it helps to talk to "someone who knows" Love you Sandra Goff

Sandra Goff - March 04, 2021 at 11:26 AM

CJ

CRES Debbie, boys and all family members,  
So sorry for your loss. He was a great person and a great childhood friend. The Sorensen family was like relatives to my family. I went to country school with Gary & Russel and remember all of our biking and crazy kids games. I'm so glad he got to have such a rich full life.  
Carolyn Joslin, COEUR d Alene, ID

CAROLYN JOSLIN - March 15, 2021 at 09:45 PM

CW

“ Debbie, Ben, Andy and the rest of your extended family, my deepest condolences. I always enjoyed talking with Russ. Wish I were closer. Hugs, prayers, and thoughts of sympathy heading your way.  
Love, Calanthe

Calanthe Wilson-Pant - March 03, 2021 at 06:53 PM

RR

“ Great man of faith,Enjoyed many bible study,s together.RIP my friend 🙏🕶️🇺🇸

Rudy Robinson - March 02, 2021 at 08:52 AM

WM

“ Dear Debbie and family,  
I am so very sorry for your loss. Please know that I am holding you close in thought and prayer.  
Wilda McGraw

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**Wilda McGraw** - March 02, 2021 at 01:59 AM

CP

“ Dearest Debbie,  
We send our prayers and love to you and your family. We are so sorry for your loss. With your deep faith in God, you will muster through.  
Know that Chuck and I are close in spirit.  
With much love,  
Chuck and Carole Plymale

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**Carole Plymale** - March 01, 2021 at 11:18 AM

DR

“ We send our most sincere condolences to Debbie and family.  
May our dear Lord comfort and sustain you all during this difficult time.  
We will most definitely miss Russ but the memories are always with us.  
Blessings always, Twyla and Dave Ruffie

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**Dave Ruffie** - February 28, 2021 at 02:56 PM

JB

“ My most heartfelt condolences on the passing of Russ. A life well-lived - may he rest in peace and may his family take comfort in their priceless memories of him! Julie Buckley

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**Julie Buckley** - February 28, 2021 at 02:16 PM



“ 2 files added to the album *Memories Album*



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**Wayrynen-Richards Funeral Home** - February 26, 2021 at 04:06 PM