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GREATER SPOKANE VALLEY
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NO ACT OF
KINDNESS
NO MATTER
HOW SMALL,
IS EVER
WASTED.

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"I had the pleasure to work with Ty at water district 3 for many years. I found him to be a very knowledgeable and dedicated person, concentrating on the betterment of his community. Spokane lost a good man with Ty's passing. My deepest sympathy to his family and friends."

-Frank Pierson

"I am stunned and saddened by Ty's passing, and my heart goes out to Diane and the family. As a hydrologist, I had the great privilege of serving Ty and the Spokane Aquifer Joint Board for a number of years, starting from when he founded the SAJB all the way to his retirement. I conducted hydrologic studies for Ty and the SAJB as they worked to help protect the region's groundwater resources and the Spokane River. Over that long period, I could see that Ty cared deeply about how these resources are interwoven with the way of life in the region. Yet it went beyond that. He clearly cared deeply about service to the community through his work, and it became apparent over the years that his vision to create the SAJB and shepherd its work sprung from that care and ethic. After the significant drought in 2015, he engaged me in a brain-storming session that led to one of the most interesting studies I've ever been involved with in my 30-year career - and more importantly, perhaps the most useful study for a local community. Ty wanted us to examine the entire history of water use and climate in the region, so that the region would have a more solid knowledge base on which to make future decisions about water management. That study turned out to be more informative than either of us had expected when we started on it, and the local members of the water community seemed to genuinely embrace its findings and implications as we presented it at local water forums. The usefulness of that work was an indication of the power of his vision and foresight, and his care for the community. Brad Phelps (a friend and colleague for many years) summed it up perfectly below, with his words about Ty's friendship, leadership, mentorship, and larger-than-life presence. I felt all of that too and am so grateful that I had the privilege to cross paths with Ty and learn from him ... and to eat with him at his favorite breakfast haunt!"

- John Porcello, GSI Water Solutions, Portland

"My deepest sympathies to the family. Ty was a leader in our industry and I am very proud to have and worked with him. His knowledge and dedication will be truly missed."

- Terry Pickel, CDA Water Dept. Director.

The memories will live on

By Nina Culver

Current Contributor

Gregory Ty Wick, who was known as Ty to everyone in Spokane Valley who knew him, died suddenly in December only two years after he retired from working more than two decades as the general manager of Spokane County Water District No. 3.

He may not have spent his youth pining for water irrigation work, but that's where he found his passion, said his wife, Diane Wick. He got his start in Trentwood Irrigation District No. 3, where his step-father, Richard Meyer, was on the board.

"It was a one-man show," his wife said. "He did everything from labor in the field to administrative duties."

Wick earned a degree in animal science from Washington State University in 1974. He was interested in farming, but realized that owning a farm large enough to support his growing family wasn't going to happen, his wife said. He took the job with Trentwood Irrigation and found work that interested him.

"This water industry is quite fascinating and he got caught up in it," she said.

He would also take on running Irvin Water District No. 6 while he still held the job at Trentwood before he and his family moved to Yakima in 1984, where he worked as the water superintendent for the City of Yakima

Water and Irrigation Department. In 1994, he moved back to Spokane Valley to take the reins at Water District No. 3. The couple had family here and wanted to return to the area, his wife said.

"We grew up here," she said. "This was a great job opportunity for him and he wanted to come back."

Frank Pierson has served on the Water District No. 3 board for the last 30 years, working with Wick during his entire tenure. He said he was impressed by Wick's work ethic.

"I think the one word I'd use is dedicated," he said. "Ty was very, very involved in the community, especially the protection of the water."

Wick was a founding member of the Spokane Aquifer Joint Board, which is dedicated to community education and awareness about the sole-source aquifer that supplies water to the entire region. "He was the one who originated that and brought the whole community in," Pierson said. "Every little district, every little wellhead was involved."

Wick "knew his stuff," Pierson said. "He was very specific in what he wanted."

Wick's loss is a loss for the community, Pierson said. "I think Ty had so much knowledge," he said. "Ty was a good man. I think that's the main thing, he was just a plain good man."

Wick and his wife met during



Ty Wick Oct. 1951 - Dec. 2020

their senior year at East Valley High School. Wick was a new arrival and Diane Wick remembers noticing him for his height at first. Then she got to know him and invited him to the Sadie Hawkins dance. He accepted, and they were an item after that.

"He was just such a nice man, very kind and gentle," she said. "He had goals. He wanted to go to college. That resonated with me. I wanted to go to college, so off we went to college."

The couple married in 1971. She didn't finish her degree at WSU right away because they started their family, but she would attend night classes off and on for years before she finally earned her degree.

The family liked to go camping and fishing together, something he enjoyed doing with his children and then his grandchildren. "We had favorite spots in Idaho and Washington," she said.

When Wick retired, he settled into his 40 acres in the foothills of Mount Spokane and worked to manage the forest on his land. He was a member of the Washington Forestry Association and also participated in the Department of Natural Resource's Small Forest Landowners program and the Washington State University's Forestry Extension program.

Everything was going well and Wick seemed to be healthy, until one day he wasn't. "His symptoms appeared on Sept. 30," his wife said. "It was apparent that something very dramatic was going on."

Wick had an excruciatingly painful headache that left him staggering and hanging on to walls. He became quiet and withdrawn and stopped eating. "His personality was completely changed," she said.

She took him to the emergency room, where he was diagnosed with a sinus infection and sent home with



Contributed photo

Ty Wick, and his wife Diane, celebrated their 49th wedding anniversary June 26, 2020.

ON THAT NOTE

antibiotics. His wife, however, knew something was deeply wrong and made him an appointment with his primary care doctor.

On the day of his appointment, which was the next week, a traffic accident made them late and the doctor's office said he couldn't be seen. She left behind a log of her husband's symptoms and started the drive home. "I had charted everything," she said.

The doctor read over her notes and called her before she made it back home. He told her to take her husband directly to the Holy Family Hospital emergency room. Doctors were waiting when she arrived and whisked Wick away for an MRI.

Wick was diagnosed with glioblastoma, a type of brain cancer. His wife said she was told it was slow growing and could have been there for decades. When it was discovered, the tumor was the size of a tennis ball.

Wick went through radiation and chemotherapy and seemed to be doing well. "He got to the point he was feeling really good," she said. "He thought he had another year to live."

Then he went into the hospital for seizures. After medication controlled the seizures, he was sent home. It was quickly apparent, however, that he needed Hospice care, his wife said. "Ty just started slipping so fast," she said.

He died five days later, on Dec. 11. His wife is still trying to process his sudden death. "It just happened so fast," she said. "We're just so stunned at how fast this went. It's hard to believe he's gone."

No service is currently planned. In addition to his wife, Wick is survived by daughter Gail Wick (Ryan Orth); son Greg Wick (Jen); four grandchildren; his mother, Betty Meyer; sister Terry Wick, brothers Tim Wick and Glenn Wick, and numerous nieces and nephews.

His wife said she will miss her lifelong companion. "I'll miss all the family time," she said. "The family is still here, but it's different." ❄️

"The loss of Ty is so hard for myself and my company, Newton Excavating, not only did I having a working relationship with Ty, my Dad and I had a very strong friendship with him, we spent the last 25 years replacing the water mains and infrastructure at SCWD#3, Ty will be sadly missed by me and my family, my thoughts and prayers are with his loved ones, during this difficult time, God has a plan, not sure what it is, but he must have needed Ty from something special, because Ty was something special to us, never give up the faith, it's are only hope in this short life on earth we all have."

- Mark Newton

"It is with a grieving heart that I learn of Ty's passing. Through the 35 years that I knew Ty and Diane, I always felt a spirit of brotherhood with Ty. Our paths initially crossed through business, but our relationship grew to friendship. Having both grown up, 10 years apart, in Spokane, we shared many a story - in the town we called home. Interestingly, we met in Yakima working on the City water and irrigation systems. Then when we both moved back to Spokane in the 1990's, and during this time in Spokane we spent much time together, crafting many infrastructure improvements of Spokane County District No. 3, and then with the Spokane Aquifer Joint Board (SAJB), its planning, development and assurance for continuing success to have clean drinking water for the citizens of Spokane. I have fond memories of the two of us making over 90 presentations in one year about the importance of clean water as representatives of SAJB. Presentations to local agencies, social clubs, and anyone who would be willing to listen to us. Ty's passion about the subject matter - Water - was always forefront, and it exuded in his presentations. Although he didn't like speaking in front of large groups - he did so, to get the message of the importance of clean water to the masses of Spokane. He was always one to be involved in the industry and never sat back and watched - he was was the one leading and blazing new trail. In later years, I would stop by his office and enjoy seeing his eyes light up and talk of old times - but not for very long, as there were always future pressing issues to discuss and the need to develop new solutions. Ty, thank you for your friendship, leadership, and mentorship, which started as a business partner - In my eyes you were always larger than life, and as a friend I will certainly miss you. To Diane and family, please know that you are in our family's prayers and that your husband/father was a great man and well respected by many."

- Brad Phelps

