



Bill Jabas

May 8, 1930 - May 21, 2022

Bill Jabas passed away just after his 92nd birthday, at Kaiser Hospital in Vallejo, after a series of health challenges. He is the beloved husband of Sue Wynne Johnson (nearly 34 years), father of Lisa Jabas, and grandfather of Joshua, Damian, and Madison Stonequist. Bill was born in Missouri in 1930, and soon thereafter moved with his family to Mt. Princeton, Colorado (Chalk Creek to locals). He was raised (and is predeceased) by his mother Alma, sister Almita, and grandparents Lloyd and Nellie Cowgill. Bill's formative years were spent exploring and fishing amidst the 14,000 foot Collegiate Peaks and fresh water streams. He was an avid outdoorsman, a true mountain man, with a heart as big as the mountains he came from and loved. Bill served in the U.S. Navy during the Korean War where he ran a motor launch for sailors and supplies. Once home he attended Colorado State University in Greeley where he obtained his B.S. in mechanical engineering. His education and love of nautical adventure kept him employed throughout his life, from designing and building boats in Rincon, CA, to submarines at Mare Island Shipyard in Vallejo. Bill lived in Benicia starting in 1979, the community where he and Sue designed and built two homes, furnishing both with their own handmade fine-arts and crafts. He was a master woodworker, a "wood whisperer" to friend Elaine. Count yourself fortunate to have been invited inside his shop on a day he was covered in wood shavings in the midst of a current project. Although a shy person, he always had time to stop and talk with a passerby—neighborhood kids learning how to ride bikes, adults out for exercise, walking their dogs. A sense of calm and security settled over Incline Place when the hum and purr of power tools was heard, his shop door opened wide. You could set your clock by listening to the shifting gears of his Chevy truck heading up Incline towards town for his morning coffee break with friends, where he'd tinker his his daily NYTimes crossword puzzle. Chances are you'd see him most afternoons in said truck, parked on the south side of First Street Pier, watching over the Carquinez Strait, indulging his fascination of the green buoy anchored there. Bill's mechanical engineering skills kept his 1993 Chevy truck running for hundreds of thousands of miles, many of which were accrued during his annual summer trips to his cabin in Pitkin, CO, where he spent time with Lisa and his grandkids. He always kept busy with a variety of building projects, motorcycle jaunts, and many fly-fishing trips---one on horseback with his friend Hank over

Kearsage Pass, in search of golden trout in Independence Creek. Count yourself fortunate to have spent time with Bill in his beloved second home. Or if you were privy to hear him tell about one of the many close calls he had on solo adventures, where surely a man of lesser stature and abilities would have met his maker long ago. Though soft-spoken and quiet, Bill was a keenly intelligent man with deep thoughts and beliefs. He loved and supported his family, respected the earth, its furry and feathery inhabitants alike. Come Autumn and the threat posed by the first serious snowfall of the season that might hinder his trip west over the Rockies, he'd head home to Benicia. This will be the first summer in 25 years that neither Bill nor his truck will make the journey. As per his request there will be no memorial—the family would greatly appreciate any gesture of kindness you might offer in Bill's spirit and memory. Cousin and friend Tom Wynn wrote, "I only wish he's in a better place, casting a ginger quill fly to land just so on a heavenly stream, to coax a finned creature out from under a cut bank, to admire it's beauty as he gently returns it from whence it came." Grandson Damian wrote, "His story isn't over. It lives on through us, through the people's lives he touched, his creations, his impact on the world. I know he is in the great cosmic forest fishing the streams of forever, catching-and-releasing the stars."

Remembering My Grandfather

My grandfather was a force, whether it be in the way he touched lives of his unyielding desire for work and creation. His home being a testament to this, surrounded by physical representations of his accomplishments. His pursuit of education was something to be admired by many; growing up impoverished during the Great Depression, he traversed great distances to receive it, working grueling jobs to maintain it. After grade school, he joined the navy with that unquenchable passion, not faltering in his pursuit of knowledge. Even in the face of war and concepts that peered down as titans, he remained humbled and driven to overcome. As his mind and naval career progressed, his effect on the world came into fruition, working on projects that inspired songs and even made the Navy reconsider their operations.

This force was carried throughout his life. In my early age and when he visited, this force was apparent as I watched buildings arise from the dust and wood. Watched with sleep crusted eyes knowing he had been awake since the earliest of early birds. Either creating furniture, creating different machinations to harvest materials more efficiently, making sure we had enough wood for the frigid winters of Colorado, or just making the most of the day. I stand in a cloud of regret for the lost time; my youthful ignorance not seeing the value of a day, blind to the passage of time, blind to the wealth of knowledge before me.

My grandfather inspires me to live more in the moment, to live each day to its fullest and to appreciate the simple things, like a hot cup of coffee on a brisk morning, a roaring fire on a cold night, a lonely river with an abundance of fishy travelers, or the mathematical

elegance of his designs; okay, no everything was simple.

He taught me the true value in education and the challenges that are worth overcoming. He lived with respect to the Earth to its furry and feathery inhabitants, which is something that I will always carry with me. I know he is in the great cosmic forest, fishing the streams of forever, catching and releasing the stars.

These words feel unjustified and do not fully encapsulate my grandfather's story; volumes could be written of his adventures and adversity. I don't know how to properly conclude his story because his story isn't over. It lives on through us, through the people's lives he has touched, through his creations, through his impact on the world. I will always cherish the time we shared together and the wisdom he bestowed upon me.

I love you with all my heart Grandpa.