



Carl R. Nelson

July 12, 1926 - May 16, 2015

Carl R. Nelson, 88, passed away at his home on Saturday, May 16, 2015. He was surrounded by family. Carl was born to Swedish immigrants, Edith and Gunnar Nelson, on July 12, 1926 in Rockford, IL. Carl spent his youth in Rockford with his parents and beloved sister, Elsie, building small sail boats, riding his bike, playing with the Gustasen boys next door, and playing the mandolin in a local band. An instrument he enjoyed “playing” his entire life.

In 1944, Carl enlisted in the United States Army and served in the Asiatic Pacific Theater. While stationed in Japan as part of the occupational force, the first flashes of his entrepreneurial spirit shined through with the successful creation of a laundry service, and several other ventures. After completing his military service, Carl returned to the Chicago area and began working as a stone mason. He worked around Chicago, IL and Omaha, NE for several years before eventually settling in Fort Collins and focusing on custom home building. Carl quickly developed a reputation as a highly skilled mason. These skills, along with his unique design and drafting talents, and overall construction acumen allowed him to rapidly expand his business. His unwavering focus on quality and customer service allowed him to develop a reputation as the premier custom home builder in Fort Collins. Over the years, Carl’s reputation of integrity and focus on quality only continued to strengthen. Many examples of his work exist today in the classic Fort Collins neighborhoods of Parkwood, Lindenmeier, Indian Hills and Warren Shores; to

name a few.

After spending nearly thirty years building custom homes in Fort Collins, in 1982 Carl decided to take a step back from full time home building and to diversify his business by pursuing a career in real estate. A decision Carl often described as the best professional decision he ever made, and one he wished he had made earlier, as it freed him to concentrate on his true passion; working with people. Carl jumped into real estate with both feet, working with several different real estate organizations before joining The Group, Inc. in 1984. Over the next thirty years, Carl worked with countless colleagues and clients; never forgetting a name, a phone number, or a client's address. Carl reveled in answering the next phone call, meeting the next acquaintance, or reconnecting with a homeowner he'd worked with years earlier, and who had since become a friend. Carl earned numerous service awards over the years for his contributions to the community and dedication to his clients. He displayed an unwavering commitment to serve throughout his life. Whether it was working alongside Sister Mary Alice Murphy to design and build low income housing, giving a referral to a colleague, providing a recommendation for a competitor or co-signing a loan for a young entrepreneur starting a new business, Carl was always quick to help however he could. Many successful careers in and around Fort Collins can trace their origins to a gesture from Carl. Words like integrity, class, and a true gentleman are commonly used to describe Carl by those fortunate enough to have known or worked with him.

Not to be overlooked or understated in any way, Carl also served as the principled, yet comforting patriarch to a diverse family of seven children, their spouses, and numerous grandchildren and great grandchildren, all of whom will miss him dearly.

Carl was preceded in death by his parents and his wife Sharon Serbousek-Nelson. He is survived by his sister Elsie Meyer, Rockford IL; his first wife,

Barbara Nelson of Durango, Colorado; daughters Pat Anesi (Greg), Telluride, CO; Sandy Nelson, Pagosa Springs, CO; and five step-children; Tami Serbousek, Fort Collins, CO; Tara Smith (John), Spokane WA; Robyn Young (Ed), Loveland, CO; Linden Serbousek (Vivianne), Windsor, CO, and Chris Serbousek (Kristen), Windsor, CO. Carl is also survived by thirteen grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

A celebration of life will be held on May 27, 2015 at First United Methodist Church in Fort Collins at 11:00 am; reception to follow from noon to 2:00 pm. In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made to the Larimer County Food Bank, CASA of Larimer County or the American Heart Association.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

MAY 27. 11:00 AM (MT)

First United Methodist Church
1005 Stover St.
Fort Collins, CO 80524

Tribute Wall

MH

“ I had the pleasure of working as Carl's closer for many, many years and he was an absolute joy to work with. I only just learned of his passing and am so sorry that I didn't know sooner. He was a man of class! He will be missed. Hugs to family and friends!

*Milre Henry
Tecumseh, Oklahoma*

Milre Henry - September 29, 2015 at 10:55 PM

HL

“ Carl was a great person to know. He brought joy to everyone he knew. He sold us our house in Fort Collins as he did to many other families. We knew him from our work and church community. His smile and positive attitude will be missed.

Harold and Liz Lang

Harold Lang - May 28, 2015 at 10:44 AM

JH

“ We have enjoyed knowing Carl for over 26 years. Our dealings with him have always been honest, pleasant and positive. He sold two properties for us and he was the most professional business person we have ever known. Carl Nelson is the standard by which all Real Estate professionals should work hard to emulate. We always told people that Carl was a friend of ours, because he was. We owned building lot property for only one day and we decided to put it up for sale the next day on Saturday morning. Carl called us that afternoon and told us that he had sold it. We said to Carl, "we have not even discussed a sale price, so how could you sell it?" He said, "I know what the property is worth and would a \$30,000.00 profit for owning it one day work for you?" "Yes, sir", we said, "that works just fine for us!"

Carl Nelson will be truly be missed by us, his family and this community. Thank you dear friend.

Jerry and Joyce Hubka

Jerry and Joyce Hubka - May 27, 2015 at 12:56 PM

RS

“ We lived right behind Carl and his family when they were on Sheely Drive and we on Birky Place where my Dad and brother still live. Little did I know at the time I was in such close proximity to the consummate professional and gentleman and icon in the Custom Home Building community.

When I started building on my own in 1974, Carl was the well established, premier Custom Home Builder we who were just starting out - wanted to "grow up to be like Carl". I can still remember the first advice he gave me and a friend just starting out. We were building our first home in Parkwood and had decided on a name - Heritage Builders - if I remember correctly, and had proudly put a sign up on the lot we were planning to build on. Carl was driving by and stopped and with his great smile, introduced himself to us and suggested we not use the name we'd chosen, as the previous contractor with that name had gone out of business and left quite a bad reputation in Northern Colorado. Most people would have let us learn a lesson the hard way - which I'm sure Carl had learned many by that point in time - but he did the right thing and taught us a "win-win" philosophy with others in the industry. Many times through the years Carl and I would be considered for the same Custom Home Project and I not only felt honored to be considered in the same context as Carl but also didn't feel so bad if "the master" was awarded the contract rather than me. I can remember one such instance where he did get the job and I didn't, and it ended up being a fairly difficult client and although he wouldn't say it - probably one he'd wished I had gotten. I remember some we'd gotten and with Carl's wisdom may have seen it was one job he was better off not getting.

I always admired his designs, his great smile, his white shirt with rolled up sleeves and his reputation. After moving into Real Estate, he always told me I should do the same. He would continue - Now that I'm in Real Estate, I work with the client between a week to a month, make about the same money and the client is almost always happy with the home and he didn't have to warranty it forever. He'd

go on - the Builder works with a client for months before the job, a year building the project, then at least a year after and you're never guaranteed a happy client despite your best efforts. This was great advice, and yet I could see in his eyes, there was that Designer, Builder and Craftsman part of him that missed the hands on part of the Custom Home Business.

Thank you Carl for being the example, for the years of advice and for the legacy you've left us.

Rick Splittgerber

Rick Splittgerber - May 27, 2015 at 10:59 AM

RC

“ We're so sorry to learn of Carl's passing. Our thoughts and prayers are with all of you. Carl built a home for us in 1970 and was very thoughtful and helpful to a young family just getting started. We still live in that same house and will always remember Carl.

Katy and Dick Christopher

Richard Christopher - May 27, 2015 at 10:31 AM

BM

“ Carl was an inspiration to many of us who had the wonderful opportunity to work with and for him. Building custom homes and medical buildings demonstrated his vision, design capabilities and attention to detail. He left nothing out and was committed to having the job done as perfectly as possible. It was inspirational to see him on the job site every day and then taking the time to talk with each of us individually.

He was definitely a good real estate sales person. He sold us our Parkwood house of 28 years in a snow storm.

A true professional, gentleman and man of his word.

Bill and Mandy Magill

Bill and Magill - May 27, 2015 at 10:10 AM

MR

“ Carl Nelson was the first friend that we made in Fort Collins 17 years ago as we wore out the tires on his new Volvo tirelessly searching for a new home. We were blessed to work with Carl and owe him much more than words can express. Carl remained a friend, and that friendship grew and extended to our children. Carl was never slow on a name or a smile regardless of the time that had passed since our last meeting. Carl Nelson represented the best that Fort Collins has to offer.

Matt and Elaine Rankin

Matt Rankin - May 27, 2015 at 08:53 AM

LR

“ What a privilege it was to have known Carl for 30 plus years both professionally and personally. Carl was a wonderful person, always taking the time to visit and help with questions and information whether it be regarding construction or real estate. My late husband worked with him through the years and we enjoyed some evenings out with Sharon and Carl. My son got to know Carl, as well and Carl helped me with several real estate transactions and we visited about the diseases that took both my late husband and Sharon My current husband also got to know Carl through some real estate transactions and thought he was so nice to work with. Carl never knew a stranger and always went the extra mile to help people. He was a true Gentleman and will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

*Lynda Rowell-Neal
John Rowell
David Neal*

Lynda Rowell-Neal - May 27, 2015 at 02:11 AM

KT

“ I remember when the Nelsons lived near us on Sheely Drive. Carl Nelson contributed a lot to Fort Collins

Kacy Thompson

Kacy Thompson - May 26, 2015 at 06:14 PM

MA

“ We wish to say Thank You to your loved one for his service to our great country. Our sympathies are with your family.

NoCo Marine Corps League Auxiliary #785

Marine Corps League Auxiliary - May 26, 2015 at 11:10 AM

GP

“ Gil P. purchased a sympathy card for the family of Carl R. Nelson.



Gil P. - May 25, 2015 at 08:32 PM

KM

“ Words don't describe what a next door neighbor Carl was. My wife Dolly in the evening goes out and stares at his deck where Carl sat and had a glass of wine in the evening. He was just the most wonderful man that lived. He always cared about us and our health. He fed our Koi when we were gone. We can still see Carl hopping over the fence to feed the fish. He always left us a bottle of wine on our front porch at Christmas. We shared tons of conversations over the fence. When Sharon was going through her battle I was also struggling with cancer. Despite everything he was going through he always asked about me. He had great humility. We met him 30-years ago when we moved here from California. Our realtor recommended we sit down with Carl and get advice on where we should live. He did just that and gave us all the time and advice we wanted not knowing that on our return to Colorado in 1996 he would be our neighbor. He knew we were secretly feeding Peppy (his dog) snacks so he would become our friend. Once he made a crack that Peppy was always waiting for us to come home so we knew we were caught. He helped my employees and friends find homes and make the right decisions on where to live even if he wasn't there broker. Once Dolly and I wanted to make some investments that he didn't agree with Carl politely convinced us not to do it even though he would have prospered if we did. Sorry to write a book, but we could go on and on. We loved that man. Ken and Dolly

Ken Munsch - May 25, 2015 at 08:24 PM

GP

“ Words cannot state how much Carl (Gentleman Carl, I called him) was respected by the building and Real Estate community. He was a mentor to many of us who would have the opportunity to run into him at the lumber yard, on the job in a neighborhood we were both working, or various builder functions. He was always willing to share his knowledge give advice. I am so glad that I had the opportunity sit and chat with him a year ago. He was still sharing and mentoring. Carl was greatly appreciated by many. Thank You gentleman Carl. We were fortunate to have known you. Gil Paben

Gil Paben - May 25, 2015 at 07:07 PM