



Kenneth Ashley

December 10, 1920 - November 6, 2013

Kenneth "Ash" Ashley died November 6 in Fort Collins, Colorado four weeks before his 93rd birthday. Ash was born to Ray and Alice Ashley on December 10, 1920 in Oak Park, Illinois. He was preceded in death by his sister, Jean and his parents. Survivors include his wife, Ethel; children, Jan Brunk Ron of Whitefish, Montana, Dave Ashley Sandi of Helena Montana; two grandchildren, Laurie Dear Chad and Eric Ashley Olivia; and two great grandchildren, Jacob Ashley and Zoe Dear. Ash graduated from Colorado A & M in 1943 with a Degree in Forestry. He became engaged to Miss Ethel Rayner, a native of Fort Collins, before enlisting in the Marines. He was a WWII Veteran serving in the U.S. Marine Corps in the Western Pacific seeing action at Peleliu, Angaur and Okinawa as an artillery aerial observer. He was discharged with many military honors. Ash and Ethel were married on December 8, 1945 in Fort Collins. They began their married life in Walden and Gould, Colorado where they were both employed by the Michigan River Timber Company. In 1947 Ash began a career in the National Park Service as a Ranger in Yosemite where he was stationed until 1958. His career then took them to Mount Rainier NP, Yellowstone NP and Blue Ridge Parkway, Virginia. He retired as Chief of Operations in the Rocky Mountain Regional Office overseeing ranger activities in Rocky Mountain, Yellowstone, Grand Teton, Glacier and numerous other Park Service areas. After the children were grown Ethel went back to college to earn a teaching Degree at Radford University and taught until Ash's retirement in 1980 when they moved back to

Fort Collins. From a nursery planted in 1985 at their home on South County Road #7 Ash grew and supplied trees to Fort Collins City Parks, boulevards and residences. His volunteer activities included serving as a charter driver for the SAINT program. He was a Member and Chair of the Larimer County Parks Board and headed a group that produced The County Parks Master Plan. In 1990 he was appointed by the Fort Collins City Council to a three member Task Force charged with defining a vision for the future of the Cache la Poudre River. He was a member and secretary of the Colorado Forestry Association for many years. He volunteered as a Travel Counselor at The Colorado Welcome Center from the day it opened in 2000 until 2011. Perhaps his proudest achievement was being recognized as "An Outstanding Forest Steward" by the State of Virginia for his management of a Tree Farm the family established in 1969. He and Ethel were members of Timnath Presbyterian Church where he served as Elder and as Finance Committee Chairman. Ash and Ethel's marriage of 68 years was rich with family, friends and fun. To those who knew them well, they were referred to as one, "Ash and Ethel" or "Ethel and Ash". Memorial contributions may be made to Timnath Presbyterian Church or the Nature Conservancy in care of Bohlander Funeral Chapel, 121 W. Olive St., Fort Collins, CO, 80524. A Memorial Service will be held at Timnath Presbyterian Church, 4020 Main St., Timnath, on Tuesday at 1:00 p.m. Interment with military honors by the U.S. Marine Corps will follow at Grandview Cemetery at 2:30 p.m. To send online condolences to the family visit bohlenderfuneralchapel.com.

Tribute Wall

DG

“ We are thinking of you and your family, Ethel, at this sad time. We feel so blessed that our paths crossed at the Fort Collins/Loveland airport function and that we got to know you and Ash. Sending caring thoughts, Dave and Connie Gordon

Dave and Connie Gordon - November 21, 2014 at 12:00 AM

MP

“ My memories of Ken are very good ones. My first husband, David Butts now deceased worked with Ken in the National Park Service. We considered Ken and Ethel good friends. David was the NPS lead at the Boise Interagency Fire Center, Branch of Fire Management which Ken helped establish. David and I shared many memories of good times with Ken and Ethel. He contributed so much in many areas. He was a fine man, a good friend, and he will be missed.

Marjorie Butts Pietsch. - November 26, 2013 at 12:00 AM

CF

“ Ethel, Our sympathy to you and your family, from our family. You two were such great neighbors for nearly 20 years there on County Rd. 7. Our kids enjoyed both of you like another set of grandparents. I always looked forward to conversing with Ash because he knew so much and was so current on all the local issues. Above all, I know he was a hero to his family as he was to his nation, a United States Marine and member of the "Greatest Generation". Take care and God Bless. Chip Barnhart

Chip Barnhart & Family - November 16, 2013 at 12:00 AM

SM

“ *The passing of a GIANT in many ways! May your memories heal your loss and guide you into the future without him. Love, Suzie*

Suzie Morey-Menke - November 14, 2013 at 12:00 AM

EM

“ *Via Con Dios Mr. Ashley*

Eric Morey - November 14, 2013 at 12:00 AM

LK

“ *Ethel, I remember fondly working with Ash and Keith Miller in the 1980's in the Regional Office in Lakewood. Montine & I had the good fortune to live in Yosemite a few years after you left. May the peace of the Lord be with you and your family. Larry Knowles*

Larry & Montine Knowles - November 12, 2013 at 12:00 AM

BW

“ *Ethel and family: Ken's passing is a loss to all who knew him and many who didn't for all he has done to make the Fort Collins area a better place. I got to know him through Poudre River matters - the Poudre River Trust of which he was a board member - and all the additional committees and efforts associated with the river he participated in. We're all better for his contributions...and he was just a fine person to know! I am glad to have had the opportunity to have known him.*

Brian Werner - November 12, 2013 at 12:00 AM

RM

“ Every time we would walk by the "Ashley" house on Big Dipper we would think fondly of Ash and Ethel. We will continue to do so as you both made a great impression on us for your loving relationship and friendship.

Roger & Carol Morschhauser - November 12, 2013 at 12:00 AM

CH

“ We have many fond memories of Ash. He was always a best friend to my mom and dad and like an uncle to our family. I'll never forget his serenading us with Ethel and his accordion at my daughter Tessa's CSU graduation party, and his stirring farewell tribute speech of his friendship with my ailing father when my folks moved to Utah from Fort Collins. He knew they would never meet again. Mom and I talked to Ash less than a month ago. He was so sharp, clear and the consummate caring gentleman. He will be missed but the memories he left are forever.

Cliff Hyatt - November 12, 2013 at 12:00 AM

ED

“ Farewell Marine, you served your country well. Semper Fi Captain Ed Dear USMC

Ed & Mary Dear - November 12, 2013 at 12:00 AM

MC

“ Your very long, fun, happily married life with the love of your life, Ash...so special! I extend my deepest sympathy to you and yours.
Myra Coffman

Myra Coffman - November 12, 2013 at 12:00 AM

BB

“ Dear Ethel and family, I have fond memories of Ken at Pingree Park and our adventures to repair the World War II binoculars that Ken rescued, he was a true inspiration and will be missed.

Bill Bertschy - November 12, 2013 at 12:00 AM

SL

“ I want to express my sincere sympathy for the loss of your loved one and I hope the following suggestions help the family members and those who loved Kenneth Ashley to lessen their grief. • Talk about your feelings to “a true companion” who will listen patiently and sympathetically. • If you have feelings of guilt thinking that some neglect on your part contributed to your loved one’s death, realize though, that no matter how much we love another person, we cannot prevent “time and unforeseen occurrence from befalling those we love. Ecclesiastes 9:11 More than anything else, a relationship with God can help you to cope with the death of someone you love. Isaiah 33:24 promises the time when an end to sickness will become a reality. God will put an end to pain, suffering and even DEATH. God promises at Isaiah 25:8 that death will be swallowed up forever.

S. Lee - November 11, 2013 at 12:00 AM

CM

“ Surely God has found a place for a joyous accordian player.

Chuck/Gretchen McCurdy - November 11, 2013 at 12:00 AM

MA

“ We wish to say Thank You to your loved one for his service to our great country. Our sympathies are with your family. Semper Fi Marine Corps League Auxiliary #785 Fort Collins, CO

Marine Corps League Auxiliary - November 11, 2013 at 12:00 AM

HD

“ I consider Ash as not only being a great supporter of the National Park Service, but as good friend and partner when we both were members of the first directorate of the then Rocky Mountain Regional Office. We served together on a great number of operational evaluation teams and shared many good times together. My sincere condolences to Ethel and to all of Ash's family members. He was a winner, and we will miss him. Warmest personal regards,
Harold P. Danz

Harold P DANZ - November 11, 2013 at 12:00 AM

BS

“ I first met Ash when he came to Mt. Rainier Nat'l Park as Assistant Chief Ranger and I soon found out that I'd better take care of my district because "inspecting" the work of his field rangers happened frequently. He was a field ranger at heart and readily joined us in climbs to the summit, middle of the night ski trips from Paradise to Narada Falls to inspect a broken power line, SAR ventures, etc. When it came time to party, he was a master entertainer. His accordion would magically appear, and Ethel would join him in singing "Put a Nickel on the Drum." Above all, he was a fellow ranger, loyal friend, and was full of humor while commanding the respect of all of us. In his capacity as Chief of Operations in the Rocky Mountain Regional Office, he was instrumental in establishing the National Park Service as a full partner in the National Interagency Fire Center which I consider a monumental achievement. Sleep well, friend. Sally and I will never forget you.

Bob Sellers - November 11, 2013 at 12:00 AM

MC

“ *Semper Fidelis Marine. We hold your memory close to our hearts. Our thoughts and sentiments to your loved ones. God Bless You.*

Marine Corps League Detachment 785 Northern Colorado - November 11, 2013 at 12:00 AM

DM

“ *Ethel As a young ranger Ken Ashley was so high on a pedestal I thought he was 10 feet tall. His visits to the park were cause to be on your toes. I was district ranger at Old Faithful and was in the regional office. He invited me to stop by his house that evening. This was a huge honor; I felt like I'd "arrived." But older and wiser rangers told me to be on my best behavior and "when he puts on the train song, it's time to go." What, I asked? "You'll know." After a few beers and great stories I saw Ken go over to a cabinet and put a record on a turntable - a minute later, the sound of a locomotive and train whistle came chugging in from the living room, through the dining room and faded away into the kitchen. It was one of those "demo" records to show how "stereo" worked. I looked around and every ranger there drank up and within minutes, we all said thanks to Ethel and "goodnight" to Ash. What a great man. I would not be who I am today had I not known and learned from Ken Ashley.*

Dave and Jeri Mihalic - November 10, 2013 at 12:00 AM

CS

“ *I am a volunteer at the Colorado Welcome Center and I remember nothing but good about him.*

Charles Sturgill - November 09, 2013 at 12:00 AM

FA

“ Dear Ethel and family, The Brethren of Fidelity Lodge #192 grieve with you on the loss of your beloved husband and father and wish to offer you and your family our heartfelt condolences. We offer the prayer that God in His Infinite wisdom may sustain you through these trying times and lighten your sorrow, to the end that the grief you shall bear be one of loving memory.

Fidelity Lodge #192, AF&AM - November 09, 2013 at 12:00 AM

AG

“ I worked with Ken in the early 1970's when he was at the Blue Ridge Parkway. To me he was the National Park Service at its best because of his qualities of integrity, professionalism, and caring for people.

Alec Gould - November 09, 2013 at 12:00 AM

SG

“ Dear Ethel, Dave and Sandi and Jan and Ron - You are in our hearts, thoughts and prayers. Oh how we have enjoyed the stories of Ash's adventures in the Park Service. Please know, he will be remembered. Rick and Susie

susie and rick graetz - November 09, 2013 at 12:00 AM