



Dr Russell R. Boehlke

November 9, 1927 - July 17, 2016

Dr. Russell “Doc” Boehlke passed away in Fort Collins on July 17, 2016 at the age of 89. The fifth of six children, Russ was born in the family farmhouse to Emma and Fred Boehlke in Stewart, Minnesota. He grew up a farmer, graduated from the local country school, and always prided himself on working the farm. His family life was built on church, hard work, community, and, whenever possible, softball and fishing. He graduated from Westmar College in Iowa with a major in animal husbandry.

While attending a summer session at Lake Koronis Assembly, Russ met Donna Schendel, a beautiful, newly graduated RN who was working there. They were married 66 years ago, on September 9, 1950. Donna inspired Russ to attend medical school, and Dr. Boehlke graduated with his MD from the University of Minnesota in 1955. After serving in the Public Health Service as an Indian Health Services doctor in Baltimore, Miami Beach, and Cass Lake, MN, the family returned to Minneapolis where Doc began a residency in the then-fledgling field of ophthalmology.

In 1960, upon completing his residency, the Boehlke family moved to Fort Collins where Dr. Boehlke joined the ophthalmological practice of Dr. George Garrison, and subsequently founded the clinic that became the Eye Center of Northern CO. In 1983, Dr. Boehlke accepted a fellowship at the University of Mississippi to master the intraocular lens implantation technique that he went on to introduce to northern Colorado. Over his career, Dr. Boehlke served

patients for over 40 years, principally in the Fort Collins area.

Russ and Donna Boehlke were charter members of the Christ United Methodist Church in Fort Collins, where he started and then directed the youth choir for many years. Doc sought the Lord throughout his life and was never hesitant to profess his faith in Jesus Christ. During his career, Doc developed a strong interest in Christian medical missions. He, Donna, and various family members made nine annual mission trips to Africa, restoring sight to countless patients at the Kissy Eye Clinic in Sierra Leone. They also performed medical mission service together aboard the Hope Ship to Brazil, and in clinics in Haiti and Belize.

Doc was a faithful father to his four daughters and son. He took the family skiing at Medicine Bow, fishing in Canada, horseback riding in the Rawahs, and canoeing on the boundary waters. Doc coached his three older daughters into a vocal trio that performed and competed locally through their high school years. He organized family trips to Europe, Israel, Africa, and South America. At home he was always up for a family hymn-sing, or rescuing Mario's princess, or a "friendly" game of Rook. And Doc could always be counted on to provide a quick lecture on nutrition or investment strategy, or detailed instruction in the fine arts of juice-making, lawn-grooming, or cow eye dissection.

Doc loved to play softball. He learned to play on the farm, and continued to play with passion into his 50s. His love of both softball and daughter Ann led him in 1975 to create the Buckaroos. The Buckaroos were the first competitive girls fast-pitch team in northern Colorado and Doc was the founder and first head coach. In its first year, clad in mismatched t-shirts and cutoff jeans, the girls won regionals; the next year they took state. Many road trips and many regional, state, and even national achievements followed. As a direct result of his 20 years of coaching and leadership, hundreds of girls in Fort Collins have

had the chance to play softball at a highly competitive level, to earn college scholarships, and even to go on to coach at the Division I college level.

Russ was a tenacious, thorough worker who epitomized perseverance. When he set his mind to something, he would invest all of his time and effort to master any task or accomplish any goal. This characteristic held true in his hobbies, his work, his family, and serving his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Dr. Boehlke is survived by his beloved wife, Donna and four of their children— Stacy Heikes, Patty Hurley, Jim Boehlke, and Ann Boehlke—and their spouses; 18 grandchildren and their spouses; six great-grandchildren; his sister, Florey Hendrickson of Crosby, Minnesota; and many nieces and nephews.

Preceding Dr. Boehlke in death were his daughter, Mary Wierman; his parents, Emma and Fred Boehlke; four brothers and sisters; and their spouses.

In lieu of flowers those who wish may donate to the Kissy Eye Clinic, Sierra Leone, West Africa in care of Bohlender Funeral Chapel, 121 W. Olive, Fort Collins, Colorado 80524.

A Memorial Service will be held at Drake Christian Church, 608 East Drake Road in Fort Collins on Friday, August 26, 2016 at 11:00 A.M. A hymn sing and reception will follow.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

AUG **26**. 11:00 AM (MT)

Drake Road Christian Church
608 E Drake Road
Fort Collins, CO

Tribute Wall



“ *Our thoughts and prayers are with the family.*

Goodwin - May 17, 2017 at 02:06 PM



“ *Brother Russ,*

I miss you! You brought me fun, fellowship and faith. Leave me some of your determination and medical knowledge. I'm so proud of you and your work at the Kissy Eye Clinic. It was so fun to sing with you. I miss all my family siblings and Pat now in heaven together. Thank you, Russ, for caring for me. You'll be missed by Florey, Nancy, Jon, Dave and Tom Hendrickson and children. I can still pass a football as you showed me how! You were my coach in many ways, Doc Boehlke!

Florey Hendrickson

Florey Hendricksonl - August 27, 2016 at 05:35 PM

JB

“ To the family of Dr. Russell R. Boehlke: Our prayers, sympathy and condolences are with you in the loss of such a special father, husband, doctor, coach and an inspiring individual. My family and I have so many precious memories of "Doc" and his involvement with the "Buckaroos". He was a mentor to so many individuals and was so caring to everyone. He was truly a "Blessed" individual that I will always remember and respect. He always went out of his way to make people feel better and was always there for you, no matter what problem anyone had. He will be forever remembered as a father figure, friend, and a man who could be encouraging and mean it. A real loss to all of us. May God bless all of his family in this very painful loss. Jerry Brumit

Jerry Brumit - August 22, 2016 at 04:47 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Bohlender Funeral Chapel - August 04, 2016 at 05:07 PM

RS

“ Donna, Jim, and Annie-

I am so sorry to hear of Doc's passing. Some of my fondest memories from my teenage years are riding in the Suburban traveling to a tournament. I remember one particular trip where I sat in the middle up front next to Doc and sewed up old softballs. I could never pull it tight enough so Doc would make me take hold the wheel while he pulled it tight...LOL! So many little moments with him that genuinely molded me in small ways! It was a true honor to have spent my summers with all of you and the "family" he created for all of us girls and our families. He will forever live in our hearts! Please know you are in my thoughts and prayers.

Roni (Bradshaw) Snyder

Roni Snyder - August 04, 2016 at 10:36 AM

MH

“ Donna:

So very sorry to hear of your husband's passing. Please know that you are in our prayers and hope that your memories help you through this difficult time. Our heartfelt sympathy to you and your family. I miss seeing you and hope you are doing well.

Mary and Ron Hert (Vern's Toffee)

Mary Hert - August 04, 2016 at 09:31 AM

AM

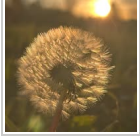
“ I learned from an early age how influential Doc was not only in my future in life and softball but in how he affected my family and how close he was to the ones I love so much. Doc was the reason I now have a passion and love for softball and I can still remember the days that he was on the field teaching me the many aspects of softball. I know especially my dad cherished the memories he and his family provided but also the moments he moved my grandparents life. I am thankful for having the opportunity to meet and learn so many valuable lessons from a beautiful soul and know everyone will miss you so much! May peace be with your family and remember how much Doc shared his love and wisdom with others.

Aubree Maul - August 04, 2016 at 12:19 AM

GN

“ I have such wonderful memories of Doc. I had the privilege of playing on the Buckaroos for four years. Doc created a family for us girls that included lots of softball, gut-busting belly laughs, Christian readings, road trips in a Suburban, educational visits to tourist attractions, exposure to universities, and loads of love. I have life-long friends as a result of the Buckaroos and it all began with Doc. He was my buddy and I will miss him. Ginny (Wahlfeldt) Niles

Ginny Niles - July 26, 2016 at 05:28 AM



“ *I would not be who I am today without the honor and privilege I have had to play for Doc on one of the first Buckaroo teams. He is a legend and a remarkable influence on all of us who's lives he touched.*

To the Boehlke family, my love and prayers are with you all. Our years together as " Leshner and FCHS family" are precious and dear memories.

The Penfold family sends our prayers for peace and love to all of you at this difficult time. May you find comfort in your boundless joyful memories of Doc.

Jennifer Grogan - July 24, 2016 at 06:20 PM

GL

“ *Dear Donna, we just returned from a auto trip to the Dakotas and MN. We were so sorry to hear of Russ's passing. We know he is with the Lord. At the Gideon prayer breakfast this morning, we prayed for you and your family as you grieve for Russ. I also learned that Russ has been singing in the choir at Pastor Charlie's church. I know that was a real blessing and joy for both you and Russ.*

We will call you to see if we can be of any help to you. We love you and you are in our prayers. George and Carol Landsverk

George and Carol Landsverk - July 23, 2016 at 05:11 PM