



Donald Zimmerman

March 23, 1950 - December 15, 2019

Donald F. Zimmerman lost his battle with pancreatic cancer on December 15. Don was at his very heart a firefighter – willing to put his life on the line for members of his community – and will be greatly missed.

Don was born on March 23, 1950 in Seattle to Mildred (May) and William Zimmerman. Both families have deep roots in the Helena area, and Don was sent to live with his cousin, Rose (Sanz) Flynn, for a time upon the death of his father. Living on a ranch near Townsend with Rose and Frank Flynn and their large family had a lasting impact on Don. The Seattle city boy came to appreciate the rural landscape, lifestyle and values, and he returned often over the years to visit and help Rose and Frank, whom he loved as a second set of parents, and his Flynn cousins.

By Don's own admission, he got into trouble in high school, and the judge gave him community service. He walked into the fire station in Lake Stevens, Washington to start his community service, and the chief took Don under his wing. Don rose through the ranks to become a Lieutenant at Mountain Lake Terrace Fire Station, and later Assistant Chief of Lake Stevens Fire Station outside of Seattle.

Don was a truck driver and equipment operator by trade. He logged over 3 million miles as a driver, and received a special 39-year safe driver award from the National Safety Council when he retired. One of the treasured stories from the firefighters at York Fire Rescue is that Don, our 3-million-mile driver, wrecked an old brush truck on the way to American Bar Fire Station. We never let him live it down!

Don once sniffed out a house fire before anyone knew it was on fire. He was riding on the tailboard of the engine during training in Lake Stevens, and he smelled something that wasn't right. He hit the buzzer and got the driver's attention, told him to go left, went a block or so, hit the buzzer, turned him right. Finally, they got to a house with smoke coming out from under the eaves. They saved the house with minimal damage – all thanks to Don's nose!

Don was a thrill seeker. He has snow skied, water skied, hang-glided, raced boats, motorcycles and cars, and at one time was a semi-professional open-wheel dirt racer. He loved trains, trucks, hot rods and going fast. If it had a motor – Don wanted to drive it! When he was in his 50's, he formed a motorcycle club called the "Old Geezers Motorcycle

Club.” According to reports (from Don), this group enjoyed the freedom of the open road, Crown Royal, and Geritol ...

Don achieved his dream to retire in Montana, settling in the York area in 2015. He immediately joined York Fire Rescue. With his experience and knowledge, he rose to the rank of Assistant Chief. He worked closely with other departments in the county, Reach Air, the Sheriff’s Department, and the Rural Fire Council. He was elected President of the York Fire Service Area Board of Trustees, in addition to his duties as Assistant Chief. With courage, enduring humor, and the incredible support of his friends, Don fought the good fight against a formidable foe of cancer. Don’s quiet but strong faith assured him of ultimate victory over death and a joyous reunion with those who predeceased Don: his parents, step-father Arvid “Andy” Anderson, sisters Beryl and baby Mildred, brother Bill, numerous cousins, and his beloved dog Cootie. He is survived by son Lucas and his children, cousins throughout Montana and Washington, and a host of friends. If wealth was measured by the number and quality of friends, Don was a very rich man.

A memorial service will be held at the Don Zimmerman Eldorado Fire Station on 7450 Nelson Road, York, MT at 11:00 am, January 4, 2020. Don’s cremains will be escorted to the station by firefighters from around the county, departing the DNRC/CLO on North Montana at 9:30 am. The public is invited to attend. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the York Fire Rescue, 6042 Nelson Road, Helena, MT 59602.

Events

JAN **Memorial Service** 11:00AM - 12:00PM

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Don Zimmerman Eldorado Fire Station
7450 Nelson Road, York, MT, US

Comments



“ A tribute video has been added.



Big Sky Cremation & Twitchell Funeral Service - January 03 at 03:46 PM



“ Beautiful arrangement Shaylene
Amber - January 04 at 09:04 AM



“ 6 files added to the album LifeTributes



Big Sky Cremation & Twitchell Funeral Service - January 13 at 03:08 PM



“ 36 files added to the album LifeTributes



Big Sky Cremation & Twitchell Funeral Service - December 30, 2019 at 03:24 PM



“ Donnie was an amazing man. He touched so many people. I'm so grateful that I was able to visit him in June. At least now he's not suffering or in pain
Love you Cousin
You are so missed already

Amber Mospan - December 26, 2019 at 01:17 PM