



## David Robert McPherson

April 13, 1941 - August 15, 2012

Glendive, Montana: David Robert McPherson, age 71, passed away on Thursday, August 9, 2012 at his home in Glendive. A memorial service will be held at 2:00 P.M. on Wednesday, August 15, 2012 at the United Methodist Church in Glendive with Pastor Ruth McKenzie officiating. Silvernale-Silha Funeral Home of Glendive has been entrusted with the arrangements. David was born on April 13, 1941 in Havre, Montana, a son of David Edward and Betty Bernheisel (Hoover) McPherson. He was raised and educated in Chinook, Montana graduating from Chinook High School with the class of 1959. Following his high school education, David attended the University of Minnesota graduating with a Doctorate of Dental Surgery degree in 1967. While attending the university, David met Twylla Reese. They were later married on August 22, 1964 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. After graduation, the couple moved to Glendive where he established his dental practice. David continued to practice dentistry until the time of his death. David's interests included gardening, reading, and hiking in the Belle Prairie badlands. He was also an avid golfer with three holes in one. David still claims the course record at the Cottonwood Country Club in Glendive. He enjoyed traveling and sharing time between his homes in Glendive, Mexico, and at the Fort Peck Reservoir. David's greatest pride was his four sons and their families. He especially loved spending time with his grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents. David is survived by his wife, Twylla of Glendive; sons, Steven Scott (Lisa) McPherson of Centerville, Louisiana; Gregory Allen

(Bridget) McPherson of St. Charles, Missouri, Bradley Colin (Carina) McPherson of Billings, Montana and Kevin Robert (Angela) McPherson of New Orleans, Louisiana; seven grandchildren, Elliot, Gabriel, Nathaniel, Nora, William, Isabel and David; one brother, Bill (Marilyn) McPherson and numerous nieces and nephews. Remembrances and condolences may be shared with the family at: [www.silvernale-silhafuneralhome.com](http://www.silvernale-silhafuneralhome.com). Today is an important day. Today we remember and pay tribute to David Robert McPherson. It is my honor to present the eulogy. Let us begin at the end. David chose to end his own life. The pain and grief from his death is great. The David everyone knew would never intentionally hurt anyone, least of all his family, and his family feels that David ending his life was an action intended to protect or save them from something he deemed worse than his death. David's family wants each of you to know that they do not feel cheated out of what might have been, but instead they count their blessings for the time they had, and for the love and experiences they shared with this amazing man. Twylla, Steven, Greg, Bradley, Kevin and their families invite each of you to celebrate David's life with them. David Robert McPherson. Doctor David Robert McPherson. He was amazing! If you knew him at all, you probably had encountered his quirky sense of humor. Doctor Randy Reynolds, has a lifetime of memories of David. David mentored and worked with Randy in dentistry, and probably mentored Randy a bit in life, laughter, and golf. Randy wrote the following thoughts, which would probably bring a smile to David's face. "Doc, we have these questions. Why? Why do you wet that coin and stick it on your forehead and walk around like it's completely normal? Why, when it's etiquette in golf to be quiet, do you make that clucking sound with your tongue right as the ball is hit? Why do you always have to smash your sandwiches? Why, when your basement walls get knocked full of golf ball holes, do your kids get state championships and at our houses we get in trouble?" David did goofy things at unexpected times. For his family, those moments included: opening a pop can by your cheek, do you know that trick? Or when he was doing something a bit routine, he would jump, spin and clap

simultaneously; Brad can do a great imitation. And it wasn't just coins he stuck to his forehead, in the office it might be sticky notes, at home it might be bottle caps, whatever he could get to stick. There were times that Twylla felt inclined to have to explain his sense of humor to people encountering it for the first time. But you know, you might shake your head or roll your eyes at his antics, but you just loved him for it. David was a special man. David was always kind and gentle and he lived the Golden Rule. He respected and accepted everyone. David set a very high standard for himself both personally and professionally, and he was very analytical, striving for perfection in all that he did. Besides his quirky sense of humor, he had an amazingly bad sense of direction. Parking lots were a good place to lose your vehicle, and when traveling or in a new place, you couldn't hardly let him go to the bathroom alone or the search would be on. If you didn't pay attention, he would drift off going who knew where or why. He could get lost anywhere. Another affliction David had was a problem remembering names. But he would address this by giving people nicknames. His nickname for himself was "King David." Steven observed that David was born fascinated by the simple things in life and had a childlike wonder of the world. Brad remembers a cobweb that was catching the light and his father wouldn't let him sweep it away until he had thoroughly admired the artistic beauty of it. It was often the simple things that caught David's attention. David began his life journey in the small Montana town of Chinook. He was the younger of two sons. Growing up, summers for David were spent at Flathead Lake at his grandpa's. High school was a fun time for David. He played football, was in the National Honor Society, was the junior class president, and had a group of friends that he remained close to throughout his life, getting together with them for many visits and reunions. His first year of college was spent in Bozeman, and David had a bit too much fun. He then attended the University of Minnesota, with thoughts of mortuary science. David's older brother Bill suggested dentistry, the profession Bill was into, and Bill then helped David get into the dental school. It was while David

was at the University of Minnesota that he met his life partner, Twylla. David's fraternity and Twylla's sorority, began working on a project together. Twylla didn't work on the project as she had other commitments. When the project was finished, the guys in the fraternity came over to serenade the gals in the sorority. It was there that Twylla spotted David. After the serenade when the two groups were socializing, David came over to Twylla and they began to visit. Obviously he had noticed her also. David told Twylla that he was from "Schnook", Montana, and Twylla was a bit skeptical; then David informed her that his parents lived in the Virgin Islands. That raised an eyebrow. But it was all true as she found out. On their first date, David told Twylla that his intentions were to move back to Montana when he finished school, and if that was a problem, then there was no point in going forward with anything. Twylla must have seen a future in Montana. She found out David had an early morning class and he had to walk right past the steps of the student center to get there. Guess who could be found on the student center steps early every morning for a "chance" meeting with David? Twylla and David were married while he was in dental school. The boys liked to tell people that David and Twylla were married on August 22 and Steven was born on August 23... 5years later. After graduation from dental school, David and Twylla came back to Montana and began their search for a place to set up his practice. They choose Glendive, a choice they never regretted. David set up his practice, which over the years, became very successful. He and Twylla bought a home and began their family, which grew to include four sons, Steven, Greg, Bradley, and Kevin. When it came to dentistry, David was a master. He was reassuring, gentle, and sensitive to the needs of his patients. For David, dentistry was not about the money; his philosophy was if you did the job right, everything else would follow. He charged less than the going rate; he never took advantage of his patients by doing procedures that were not needed, and he stood behind his work. David respected each and every one of his patients. As for his staff, they saw his care and compassion for the patients. "Doc" always gave his best and he expected his staff to do the same. Becky,

Rhonda, Alice and Laurel were long time employees of Doc's, and all say that Doc taught them many things about dentistry, ethics, and life, and feel he influenced the people they have become. Becky remembers David saying, "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." Without exception, his staff loved his humor, they respected him as a dentist and a person, they became extended family to the McPherson's and vice versa. Jeanette from the office in Miles City, recalls that Doc always told her not to sweat the small things, and she never heard him raise his voice. Her mental picture of him is when he would talk to her he would have his elbow in his hand and his fist under his chin. And he thrived on "expressions" unusual ones. Alice tells that on the 40th anniversary of Doc's dentistry career, the girls showed up at McPherson's house for a surprise pizza and beer party. "And oh the Christmas parties we had," remembers Becky, "and the gifts we received were like no other." Rhonda laughs as she told how they would draw names for gifts, but Doc couldn't remember who he drew, so Twylla would have to call and find out. Much fun and laughter was shared over the years, and every day in the office was a good day. But the most important thing in David's life was family, and family time. A lot of family time was spent at their cabin at Fort Peck. David didn't swim and he always wore a life jacket. The family had a boat and David loved to cruise the 1700 miles of shoreline finding new places to land and explore. He would often say as they walked a new place, "Who knows the last time a human stood here." David and Twylla's marriage was a mix of love and friendship, support and encouragement, and a sharing and appreciation of experiences and friends. David was extremely proud of his sons, and his grandchildren are perfect. Their home was a favorite gathering place for their friends and their sons' friends. David was a father figure and mentor to many young men over the years. Jorge, a foreign exchange student from Mexico that stayed with the McPherson's had this to say about David: "I think he had one of the smartest points of view about life that I have ever found so far... I remember how, with a bad joke, he could make a problem look way smaller. I remember the day we had an eggs battle in the town and

the police took us (Brad, Kevin, and me) to the Police Station... And as he came to pick us up, he saw I was really sorry and worried about it. His first words to me were: don't worry, this is Mickey Mouse. I have been using this sentence many times since then." Jorge had to have Brad and Kevin explain what "Mickey Mouse" meant in the context that David used the phrase. It was one of those unusual expressions David used. Jorge's opinion is that "in any of our meetings, it was always funnier and better to have him close." One of the people that David was a father figure to was Angie Mittlestadt. They had many talks and discussions about many things in life, including successful and happy marriages, and being a good parent. David gave her much good advice. In particular, on being a good parent, David told Angie that if your kids wanted to be around you, and had their friends be around you, you probably were doing a good job of parenting. David spent a great deal time with his sons hunting, golfing, enjoying at their cabin at Fort Peck, traveling, and just hanging out at home. He mentored his son Greg in dentistry and was looking forward to helping Kevin get started in his own dental practice. David and Twylla felt lucky in their son's choices of wives, and have come to love and enjoy each of their daughters-in-law. And with the grandchildren, David's patience was endless and he commented to Twylla that the grandkids were getting to the ages that he considered fun. Not a man to verbalize his love, David showed his love through actions, by example and by time spent with his family enjoying and sharing experiences. His sons always felt the love their father had for them. Did his sons try his patience? Sure...but here is an example of truly sensitive parenting. Steven, age 14 or 15, was upset one day and kicked a hole in the living room wall. He immediately knew he had messed up big time, and was a bit terrified of his parents reaction. About then, David walked in and said "Did it go?" Steven just blankly looked at him and said "What?" "The field goal, did it go?" Just a father reading his son's emotions, recognizing that his son understood what he had done, and that no further words about it were needed. David sometimes would have what

Steven termed as “eruptions of emotions,” and because of their rarity, they were memorable moments. It seemed to happen when they left home for college. David would get very emotional and tell them how much he loved them and how proud of them he was. When they would all get together as adults, David seemed to get a big kick out of walking into the room and greeting them by their professional titles, “Doctor... Doctor... Doctor... Doctor.” As for Twylla, David would leave her notes of affection everywhere, in the bedding she would take to the cabin, in her textbooks when she was teaching. David would leave messages to her written in lipstick on her bathroom mirror. It was crazy and wonderful. As a husband and father, he is cherished for all that he brought to the lives of his family. He taught them much about how to be good and decent people, how to live lives of meaning and purpose, and how to enjoy your world and the people in it. And of course we can’t remember David and not talk about his golf. David began golfing at about the third grade on the sand greens of Chinook, and for David it was the only sport that mattered. He never quit the game although he threatened to many times. He practiced constantly. He had a driving range in the basement, and it drove Twylla crazy the amount of time he spent in the bedroom practicing his swing in the bedroom mirror. He put a hole in the carpet honing that perfect swing. But it must have paid off because when he went to golf school in Florida, David was impressed with how impressed the pros were with his perfect swing. He had several holes in one, and the local course record. He mentored his sons on the game. The family joke was that the reason Kevin didn’t play golf was that David already had a foursome with his first three sons. After a long winter of analyzing and practicing in the house, come spring David was always sure he had the “key to golf.” David, Greg, and Brad took a trip to Scotland to golf and played on the St. Andrew’s course. When David and Twylla were buying their home in Mexico, David wouldn’t even look at homes that weren’t on the golf course. David’s favorite shot on any course was his chicken putt. Just put the ball between your thighs, waddle over to the hole and lay the egg in. David enjoyed his beer, 3 or 4 at a time,

and he liked them at room temperature. The best food in the world was whatever the golf courses served. David knew how to enjoy life and all it offered and he was fun and easy to be around. He had an amazing way with people because he liked, respected, and enjoyed them, and people loved him for that. David was truly an amazing person, a good, honest, and kind man, and he touched many lives and hearts during his 71 years of living. Hold him close in your hearts, and as Dr. Suess says, "Do not cry because it is over, smile because he happened." Doctor David Robert McPherson, you will be greatly missed.

# Tribute Wall



“ *David Robert McPherson*

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