



Russ Evinrude

September 25, 1946 - March 14, 2013

Glendive, Montana: Russell Louis "Russ" Evinrude, age 66, passed away on Saturday, March 9, 2013 at his home in Glendive. A Life Tribute Service will be held at 10:00 A.M. on Thursday, March 14, 2013 in the Chapel of the Silvernale-Silha Funeral Home in Glendive with Celebrant Sandy Silha officiating. Interment will be held in the Dawson County Cemetery at a later date. Silvernale-Silha Funeral Home of Glendive has been entrusted with the arrangements. Russ was born on September 25, 1946 in Glendive, the son of Raymond and Helen (Geiger) Evinrude. He was raised and educated in Glendive graduating with the class of 1966. Russ was very athletic in his younger years playing football for four years, baseball for four years and basketball for three years. Following high school Russ moved to Wahpeton, North Dakota where he attended North Dakota State College of Science and received his associate's degree. He later moved to Dickinson, North Dakota to attend Dickinson State College. Russ had full scholarships to both colleges and played football for both of them. In 1969, Russ moved back to Glendive where he became employed as a Brakeman for the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad where he remained until his retirement in 2006. Russ met and later married Elaine Hieb in Harvey, North Dakota in 1969 and to this union two sons were born, Todd and Shawn. Later this marriage ended in divorce. Russ later met Grace Koffler and they were married on August 30, 1996 in Glendive. Russ thoroughly enjoyed sports; coaching baseball and football, umpiring baseball, refereeing AAU Wrestling, fishing, hunting, and playing

farmer on his hobby farm. He had a large passion for his horses, Black and Honey. Russ was also a rock hound; always mining for sapphires in Helena, Montana and hunting for agates in Glendive. He was an honorary greeter at CC's Café. Russ was a member of the Elk's Lodge and was on the Board of the BN Federal Credit Union in Glendive; he was a past president. Russ was preceded in death by his parents, Raymond and Helen Evinrude; one infant sister, Nancy and one infant brother, Kenneth. Survivors include his wife, Grace Evinrude of Glendive; two sons, Todd Evinrude of Durango, Colorado and Shawn Evinrude of Castle Rock, Colorado; three step-children, Ben Reynolds of Glendive, Shawna Koffler of Glendive and Beau (Brandi) Koffler of Fargo, North Dakota; two grandchildren, Bayley and Britt Evinrude; four step-grandchildren, Tyler and Jaden Kutzler and Brody and Bryson Koffler; two brothers, Darrell (Janel) Evinrude of Glendive and Dean Evinrude of Sheridan, Wyoming and numerous nieces and nephews. Remembrances and condolences may be shared with the family at: www.silvernale-silhafuneralhome.com. As we remember and pay tribute to Russell Evinrude, it is hard not to smile. Russ was a personable, hardworking, stubborn, and strong personality who right, wrong, or indifferent did things his way. The oldest of three boys, Russ, was definitely the big brother to be reckoned with. His father worked hard, and his mother suffered from medical issues that took any extra money the family had. Their home had no indoor plumbing; the outhouse was their bathroom, and water had to be hauled from a well for cooking, cleaning, and bathing. Russ's younger brother, Darrell, says taking baths was quite an ordeal, and something both he and Russ remembered vividly. First, water had to be hauled to fill a big cast iron tub. Then Mom would bathe, followed by oldest to youngest, Dad, Russ, Dean and then Darrell, with the water collecting more sand from the hills with each bath. Although never spoken, one benefit of being in school sports was showering at the school. Childhood toys were scarce. Toys were sticks, rocks, and whatever you could make. At Christmas, each boy got a small gift and then they would receive one big present to share. The sharing didn't usually go so well, with Russ asserting his

rank in the pecking order. During those growing up years there was a great deal of scuffling between the boys, with Mom trying to maintain order as best she could. The garden hose at full power worked well for cooling hot tempers. Russ's school years were filled with sports activities; baseball, basketball and football. Russ was very athletic and not only was he successful at playing sports, he developed a profound understanding of the game. He was very competitive, and it was his nature to give all he had to give to what ever he did. A friend, Marty Mann, came to Dawson Community College in Glendive to play ball, and went to a high school football game. Marty clearly remembers watching a high school player kicking the football 70 yards, a feat that mightily impressed Marty. That player was Russ Evinrude. In baseball, Russ was a catcher, an outfielder and a very good switch hitter. During his legion baseball career, Russ hit the ball to the wall in the state championship game, scoring the winning run and giving Glendive its first legion state championship title. In basketball, Darrell says they had a short hoop at home, seven or eight feet high with a plywood backboard. Slam dunking was possible, and playing pick-up ball with Russ was commando basketball; be ready to get run over, elbowed, punched, slapped, whatever, as Russ tried to rule the court. There was no fear of physical contact in Russ's ball playing. As a high school athlete, Russ was looked at by several colleges for his football abilities as a running back, linebacker, and punter. During his junior season, Russ hurt his knee, and his senior year wasn't his best. But he did go on to play college football at Wahpeton and Dickinson, North Dakota. Academically, Russ worked on getting a teaching degree. Summers between college, Russ worked part-time at the railroad. In the end, Russ took a full time job with the railroad here in Glendive because he could make more money with the railroad than he could as a teacher. Russ began on a crew of three guys who "switched engines" on a night shift. One of the men he worked with was Marty Mann. Marty tells of a time when he, Russ, and a new guy were pushing cars and got jammed up, with the cars coming back. Some damage was done, and

the railroad held an investigation into the accident. All three guys were called in; Russ was to talk first and tell his version. Well, Russ got to hyperventilating and talking so fast the stenographer couldn't keep up and broke her pencil. The proceedings came to a halt until Russ could calm down. Everything came out okay, but Russ didn't like to have to account for his actions and could get a bit excited when asked to do so. Russ did things his way and of course, he was always right. Just ask him. During these early years with the railroad, Russ married, and his family expanded to include two sons, Todd and Shawn. Russ was always involved with family, having grown up with many cousins and spending every Sunday at his grandparents for dinner and family activities. Russ loved his cousins, and they seemed more like brothers and sisters. So when two sons came into his world, Russ became a strong father figure. They too learned early that dad was always right; it was dad's way or no way. They also learned how proud he was of them throughout their lives, loudly bragging about everything they did to all who would listen. Todd says that listening to his dad brag on them was almost embarrassing. Todd, for one, tried to live up to his dad's bragging, not wanting to disappoint Russ. Todd feels that his dad contributed greatly to Todd being an overachiever. Shawn agrees, saying that he and Todd learned to put everything they had into what they did because their dad expected it, and Russ himself lived that way. Russ was a brakeman by then, and when his boys got into sports, Russ became involved in coaching. He coached his sons in AAU wrestling, baseball, and football. Russ taught his boys, and all kids that he coached, about goal setting, and working hard. Russ was a good coach; he liked sports and was very knowledgeable. He enjoyed the kids and could motivate them, and over the years, Russ touched many lives with his coaching. He never forgot a kid's name or face once he had had them on his team, and many kids have grown up with great memories of times playing sports under Russ's command. A special talent Russ had was restringing baseball mitts, and caring for them, something he taught anyone who wanted to learn. During the years that he followed his sons' sports, Russ changed his job at the railroad

so he could be home to follow his son's activities. Both boys will testify that their dad's voice was always the loudest one at every sporting event. But it wasn't just competitive sports that Russ shared with his sons. Every summer between baseball and football, the family went to Helena, camped and hunted sapphires. The boys felt that sapphire hunting was hard enough work that they call it a training camp. But Russ loved the outdoors and he enjoyed hunting rocks, sapphires and agates. Russ learned to cut and facet the stones, and even do some gold work and setting. Russ loved to fish, especially for walleyes. He did take Todd and Shawn once that they remember. It was down by the Black Bridge, and Russ didn't fish, but spent all his time baiting and untangling their lines. The day came to an end when the boys got bored and began throwing rocks, breaking a window out of their vehicle. There was no mention of any fish being caught. Russ also enjoyed hunting deer and elk, and when the boys were younger, would take them with him to shoot archery targets. Russ also started his brother, Darrell, in archery and target shooting. Darrell tells of target shooting with Russ and some other friends out at Makoshika. Russ had a big fancy compound bow, but couldn't hit anything with it. His friends got to needling Russ about his shooting. Russ didn't take needling very well, and he got mad and threw his bow. Then he got to listen to them go on about how he came closer to the target just throwing the bow rather than shooting with it. Russ's hunting buddies don't speak highly of Russ's shooting abilities and aren't even sure if he ever did shoot a deer. They think so. But good shot or not, Russ did like the hunting experience. Russ's first marriage came to an end with divorce. But another woman was to come into his life, Grace Koffler. Grace says she and Russ began a friendship because of a mutual love of Schnauzer dogs, and with some help from brother Darrell. One day when enjoying time with friends at a park in town, one of the friends with them was Pastor Bob Weinberger. Russ, in front of Grace, asked Bob if he would marry Grace and him. Grace was speechless, not having been asked herself by Russ. But as was Russ's way, he just assumed if he wanted it, so must she. Obviously, they did work that

out, and Pastor Bob did eventually marry them and the reception was at Dairy Queen. They have been together over 16 years. Russ and Grace lived on an acreage Grace has close to town. They enjoyed many things together. Russ included her when he went fishing; obviously she could bait and untangle her own lines. In the early years of their marriage, they would take a boat and trailer and head to Fort Peck, something they both really enjoyed. For her part, Grace introduced Russ to horses and riding, something he came to truly love. He became a “wanna be” cowboy, and his kids called him the “drugstore cowboy.” But the horses, and riding their land or going out to Charlie Ferguson’s ranch and riding the badlands, were special times for Russ and Grace. They both shared a certain peace in their hearts and minds when they were riding. Grace says that Russ would go down to the barn, sit on a stool, and just watch the horses and be content. They were his soul food. His special horse was called Black. And of course, along with the horses, there were always dogs special to their hearts. By now, Todd and Shawn had started lives of their own, living away, coming home for visits. Grandchildren joined the family, but to Russ’s dismay, they lived too far for him to be as involved with them as he would have liked. Russ loved kids and always wanted a daughter. He was great at starting conversations with little girls he would see and then giving them a dollar or two. So a granddaughter was going to be a special person in his life. It was one of his regrets that he didn’t get to see his grandchildren more. Along with his sons, they were most important in his life. Russ was an intense, stubborn, and competitive individual, with a heart of gold. He was very social, a man who liked people, and people liked to be around him. Russ loved to flirt with the ladies. He loved to tease. Shawn says that if his dad didn’t tease you, he didn’t like you. But Russ was not good at being teased. That was not fun for him. And he didn’t like to be told what to do. He wanted things done his way. He and Shawn had a real head butting match when Shawn came to help Russ build his deck. Shawn is a construction engineer and would not let Russ cut corners. They

each fired each other from the job several times, and finally Russ told Shawn to just build it the way he, Russ, wanted it built. Shawn built the deck the way Shawn wanted to! Stubbornness, is that a learned or inherited trait? Russ had many talents but mechanical things were not included in that list. His family says he was a graduate of “Southern engineering.” Russ was great at tearing things apart, but could never get them back together. He would fix things by just buying new ones. He had a tractor he loved to run around the place. It made him feel like a farmer. And his favorite vehicle was a '97 Dodge truck. He liked how high he sat up in it. It was “Ram tough” and it had to be with all the dings Russ put into it. But he loved it. Something else that Russ loved was eating. He was also a very good and competent cook and a master grill chef. At night, Russ would sleepwalk and eat. Todd and Shawn would come home late and be trying to sneak in, and there would be Russ, raiding the fridge, oblivious to them. Grace would find open peanut butter jars on the counter, or perhaps all the leftovers would be gone and the kitchen a mess. Russ was never sure if he dreamt it or actually did it. These last years, CC’s Café was a second home. He loved to visit with everyone who came in the door; there were no strangers in Russ’s life. If you wanted to get a hold of Russ, you could call CC’s. Russ was not good at answering his phone. Todd says he had more conversations with his dad by voice mail than by Russ answering his phone. His family joked that Russ had a lunch ticket that was punched each day at CC’s. It gave Russ much pleasure to have somewhere to go each day, and people to visit with. Russ was proud of his life. He had not grown up with much and had earned his own way, working hard. He had been good at sports and touched many lives in a positive way with his coaching; he had raised two sons to be fine men he could be proud of; he had a wife, family, and home he loved, and he had made many friends during his lifetime, and experienced many good things. When Russ retired in 2006, he took off his watch. He was ready to enjoy the fruits of his labor. But retirement was not kind to Russ. His body was failing him. His knees were bad. A heavy smoker in his youth, Russ had coronary problems and COPD. Russ also had diabetes. All these issues

limited his physical ability to do the things he loved, climb into his Dodge, ride horse, hunt and fish. It was just hard. After a time in the hospital in Billings, Russ came home. On Saturday, March 9, 2013, Russell Evinrude died at home. He was 66 years old. Russ had a wish before he died. He and Grace had acquired a buckskin colt, Honey, four about years ago. Russ was no longer able to ride, but formed a special attachment with Honey. He often expressed his desire to someday ride Honey. The time has come for Honey to be broke to be ridden, and it is Grace's intention to take Russ for one last ride. Russ touched the hearts of many. He was a husband, father, grandfather, brother, friend. He was a player, a coach, a sportsman, a railroader, a rock hound, a cowboy. Russell Evinrude was a good man, and he was greatly loved and he will be greatly missed.

Tribute Wall



“ *Russ Evinrude*

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