Journalist left an outstanding legacy

Wilson was an author, an actor, and a Christian

By Elane Dickenson
Special to the Chieftain

Losing a friend is difficult, and many people lost a good friend when Rocky Wilson left this world to meet the Lord he loved so much at 1 a.m. Saturday, June 10, 2017, after 67 years on earth.

In his autobiography ("Rocky Wilson: Why Am I Here?"), Rocky claimed 18 instances — give or take a few -- in which he'd "been within inches of heaven's door," because of a long series fluke accidents or close calls. In a way, he lived long beyond his personal life expectancy, though not near long enough for those left behind.

He leaves behind his beloved wife Megan, whom he wed four years before his death.

Bonded by a love of sports and a deep Christian faith, Megan recalls first talking with Rocky before a discipleship meeting in Spokane because of the Oakland A's baseball cap he was wearing. Though she was many years younger than Rocky, and he met her not long before moving back to Wallowa for the final time, their union was meant to be.

"It was a God thing," Megan says, repeating a phrase the couple included in their wedding vows at the Josephy Center in May 2013.

He always called her "the woman of my dreams" and had proposed to her at Juniper Jam the fall before their wedding. Rocky's Oakland A's cap and Megan's Seattle Mariner's cap were both part of their wedding ceremony. Part of Rocky's final years, despite medical issues of his own, were spent in a determined search to find the best possible way to treat and beat Megan's multiple sclerosis.

As the son of late longtime Wallowa High School coach Don Wilson, Rocky grew up in Wallowa and in high school achieved local legendary status when he was quarterback for WHS state champion football team as a senior with the Class of 1968.

During high school he also began a lifelong love affair with the written word, beginning his journalism career by writing about sports for the Chieftain.

Former Chieftain publisher and editor Don Swart Sr. recalls Rocky forming part of the core of the WHS state champion football team. He later returned to the Chieftain as a writer more than once.

"All the time he was working for me, I never had a complaint about the accuracy of his stories," Swart Sr. said.

Rocky also worked under Don's son Rick Swart, who called him "a prolific writer who covered a lot of ground as a reporter, often writing eight to 10 byline news stories a week."

In his 20s, Rocky became the co-owner of his own newspaper, based in Condon, and tells stories of working 70- or 80-hour weeks to get the paper out.

Rocky's real love, was fiction, and he has three published novels: ("Sharene Death: A Prerequisite for Life," a Christian thriller, which won a Reader View award; "Isle of Fantasty, Where Good Trumps Evil" and "Tread Softly Kent State.").

He left one novel half completed, about airplane hijacker D.J. Cooper. A friend plans to finish the book, Megan said.

Rocky also wrote a nonfiction work, "Spokane: Driving In The Dark," about his taxi driving experiences, plus his autobiography, which is available only online. Rocky's books are available on Amazon and through his website rockywilsonwhyhere.com. He was proud of being an author, and there's no doubt would be thrilled to become a posthumous best-seller.

One of his most rewarding years was spent as an actor with a professional traveling Christian drama troupe called the Covenant Players, performing 200 plays and appearing on stage 500 times in the South.

Among Rocky's best friends was Gary Hulse, whom he'd gone to high school with. Hulse, who had a career with the Pendleton Fire Department, now lives in Wallowa.

"We had a lot of good times together through the years," Hulse said. "We'd go duck hunting and hang out whenever he came home."

In high school he said Rocky was not only an excellent athlete, but popular and a good student. One thing that always made him stand out, Hulse said, was his love of writing.

"He had an amazing life, good and bad. He was almost always positive ... He was a good friend and I'll miss him."

Another important person in Rocky's life was Chris Williams, his stepson by relationship but the true son of his heart.

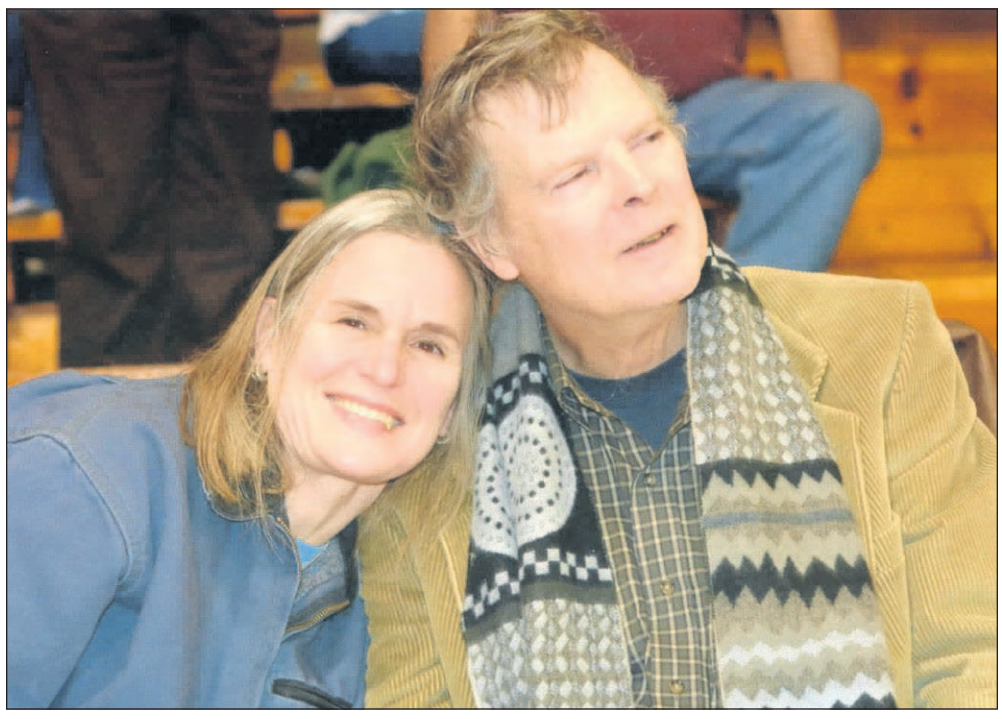
He returned to Wallowa County the last time to spend more time with his aging father, who died a couple of years ago, after I sent him an email to him about a job opening at his old paper. He prayed about it and received a definitive answer. It was time to return home.

Megan Wilson plans to stay in Wallowa and is looking forward to a big memorial gathering this summer to honor Rocky, though no date has yet been set.

"He had so many good friends. Everywhere we went he had friends," she said.

She was able to spend nine hours with him before his death and let him know that it was okay for him to let go.

"He didn't want to leave me," Megan said. "He treated me like gold. I loved him so much but I know he's in a better place. I hate that cliché, but I know it's true."



Submitted photo

Rocky and Megan Wilson were married in recent years and had lived in Wallowa prior to his death.

WALLOWA COUNTY Alcoholics Anonymous Meetings

ENTERPRISE

MONDAYS
7 p.m. Enterprise Group
113.5 E Main St.

TUESDAYS
12-1 p.m. Enterprise Group
113.5 E Main St.

7-8 p.m. Enterprise Group
(Big Bk Study)
113.5 E Main St.

WEDNESDAYS
7 p.m. Enterprise Group
113.5 E Main St.

THURSDAYS
12-1 p.m. Enterprise Group
113.5 E Main St.

7 p.m. All Saints
(Mens Mtg)
113.5 E Main St.

FRIDAYS
7 p.m. Enterprise Group
113.5 E Main St.

SATURDAYS
7 p.m. Enterprise Group
113.5 E Main St.

JOSEPH

MONDAYS
6 p.m. Grace and Dignity
(Womans Mtg) Joseph
United Methodist Church
301 S. Lake St., Church
Basement

WEDNESDAYS
12 p.m. Grace and Dignity
(Womans Mtg)
301 S. Lake St., Church
Basement

WALLOWA

SUNDAYS
7 p.m. Wallowa Assembly of God Church
205 S Alder St.

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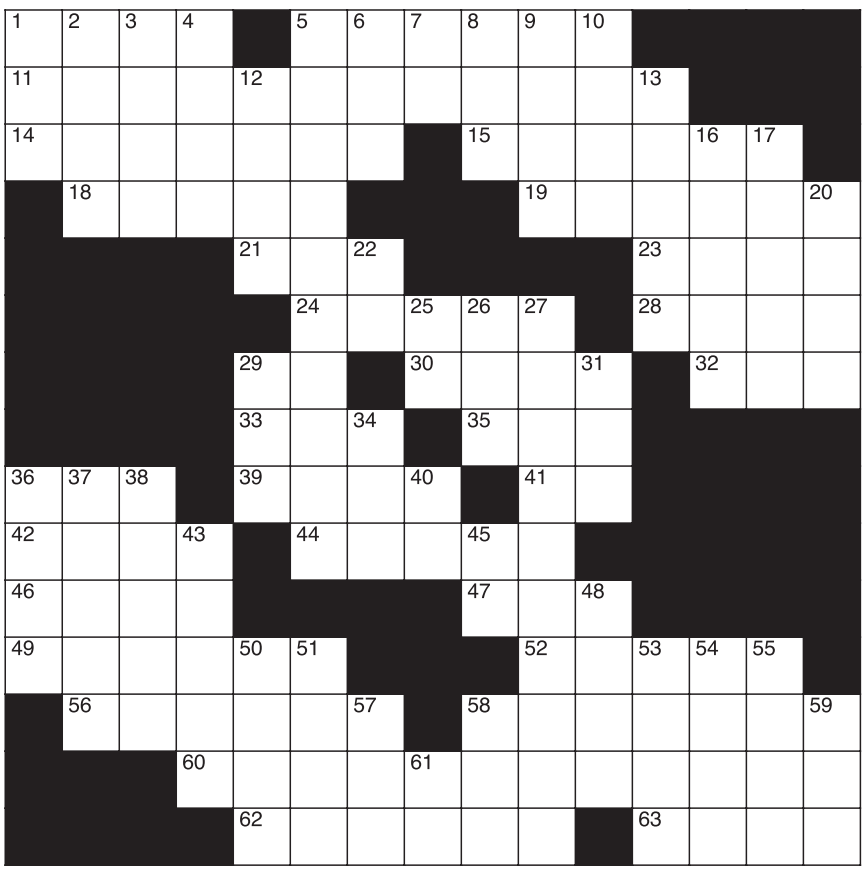

CLUES ACROSS

1. A minute amount (Scott)
5. Supernatural
11. Shortening
14. More firm
15. Other side
18. Philippine island
19. More unnatural
21. Microsoft Surface Book
23. Ice T's wife
24. Domesticates
28. Only one time
29. In absentia
30. Crustlike surface of a healing skin lesion
32. Distress signal
33. Engine additive
35. 1990s female R&B trio
36. Very fast airplane
39. A reward (archaic)
41. Anno Domini
42. Golf supplies
44. Indian term of respect
46. French river
47. Turn down the lights
49. Blood-sucking African fly
52. Provides info
56. Procrastinates
58. Tower with balconies
60. Where researchers work
62. Religious office
63. Must-have for office workers

CLUES DOWN

1. In possession of
2. Aborigines
3. Early Syrian kingdom
4. Clip
5. Misleads
6. Cosmetic Ingredient Review
7. Calcium
8. United Talent Agency
9. Hair problem
10. Took down
12. Round Dutch cheese
13. Bicycle manufacturer
16. Suffix plural
17. Painting technique
20. Small Eurasian deer (pl.)
22. Mr. T's character "__ Baracus"
25. Progressive nerve disease
26. Shock therapy
27. Able to be sold
29. Suffix
31. Binary coded decimal
34. Goes well with a carrot
36. A way to measure performance
37. Doctor __, children's book author
38. Jewish calendar month
40. Designated hitter
43. Polish village
45. Part of the mind
48. Hand (Spanish)
50. Hit with the open hand
51. Italian island
53. Shakespeare was one
54. Lake __, one of the Great
55. Oswald and Marvin were two
57. Soak up using something absorbent
58. Kids' dish __ and cheese
59. Expression of disappointment
61. The ancient Egyptian sun god

Church Directory

Church of Christ
502 W. 2nd Street • Wallowa
541-398-2509
Worship at 11 a.m.
Mid-week
Bible Study 7 p.m.

St. Patrick's Episcopal Church
100 NE 3rd St, Enterprise
NE 3rd & Main St
541-426-3439
Worship Service
Sunday 9:30am

St. Katherine's Catholic Church
Fr. Francis Akano
301 E. Garfield Enterprise
Mass Schedule
Tues-Fri 8:00 am
Saturdays 5:30pm Sundays 10:30am
(541)426-4008
stkatherineenterprise.org
St. Pius X Wallowa Sundays 8:00am
All are welcome

Summit Church
Gospel Centered Community
Service time: 10:30 am
Cloverleaf Hall in Enterprise
Pastor Mark Garland
www.summitchurchoregon.org
Summit Church

Joseph United Methodist Church
3rd & Lake St. • Joseph
Pastor Cherie Dearth
Phone: 541-432-3102
Sunday Worship Service 10:00 am
JosephUMC.org

Faith Lutheran Church
409 W. Main
Enterprise, Oregon
Worship 2nd & 4th Sundays - 2 pm
Bible Study
2nd & 4th Thursdays - 11 am
LCMS
(Lutheran Church Missouri Synod)

Enterprise Christian Church
85035 Joseph Hwy • (541) 426-3449
Worship at 9 a.m.
Sunday School at 10:30 a.m.
Evening Worship at 6 p.m.
(nursery at A.M. services)
"Loving God & One Another"
David Bruce, Sr. - Minister

Christ Covenant Church
Pastor Terry Tollefson
Church Office: 541-263-0505
Family Prayer: 9:15am
Worship Service: 10am
723 College Street
Lostine

Lostine Presbyterian Church
Discussion Group 9:30 AM
Worship Service 11:00 AM
Childrens program during service
Blog: dancingforth.blogspot.com
541.398.0597
Hwy 82, Lostine
Stephen Kliewer, Minister

Enterprise Community Congregational Church
The Big Brown Church with an open door
Pastor Archie Hook
Sunday Worship 11am
Bible Study 9:30am
Ark Angels Children's Program
Ages 4-6th grade, 11am
Nursery for children 3 & under
301 NE First St. • Enterprise, OR
Find us on Facebook! 541.426.3044

Wallowa Assembly of God
ASSEMBLIES OF GOD
606 West Hwy 82
Wallowa, Oregon
541-886-8445
Sunday School • 9:30
Worship Service • 10:45
Pastor Tim Barton
wallowaassemblyofgod.com

Seventh-Day Adventist Church & School
305 Wagner (near the Cemetery)
P.O. Box N. Enterprise, OR 97828
541-426-3751 Church
541-426-8339 School
Worship Services
Sabbath School 9:30 - 10:45 a.m.
Worship Hour 11:00 a.m. - Noon
Pastor Jonathan DeWeber

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103 SW 1st St., Enterprise

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