

Walking On...

George W. McEachran III

July 8, 1948 – Nov. 30, 2017

Tribal Elder George W. McEachran III, 69, was born July 8, 1948, in Portland, Ore., and walked on Thursday, Nov. 30, 2017, in Grand Ronde, Ore.

His parents were George Wilber McEachran Jr. of Coalwood, Mont., and Bernice Vera Howe of Grand Ronde.

He served in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War and was honorably discharged.

He was preceded in death by his parents and a brother, Richard Dean McEachran, who died on July 4, 1983, in Portland, Ore.

He is survived by a sister, Barbara Jean Danforth (McEachran) and her husband, Allen; and nieces, Amy Elizabeth Danforth and her son, Trey Norton, and Sara Rose Johnson and her husband, Jeremy, and daughter, Arabella.

His family thanks the Grand Ronde community for its help and support given to George as he was his happiest living at Grand Ronde.

A sharing of memories and celebration of life with veterans' honors will be held at noon Friday, Jan. 12, at the Elders Activity Center, 48940 Blacktail Drive.

Dallas Mortuary Tribute Center is caring for the family.

Leon "Chips" Tom

July 15, 1928 – Dec. 16, 2017

Former Tribal Council member of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Leon "Chips" Tom, who many considered to be the face of the Grand Ronde Tribe because of his prominent role in a mid-2000s Spirit Mountain Community Fund ad campaign, walked on at the age of 89 on Saturday, Dec. 16, 2017.

Chips was born on July 15, 1928, in Grand Ronde to Clinton Tom and Cora (Voutrin) Tom. He attended Grand Ronde Elementary and Willamina High schools, as well as Chemawa Indian School. He lettered in three sports – baseball, basketball and football. "Chips is arguably the finest athlete that ever attended Willamina High," said Rod Pedersen, who played with Tom at Willamina High in 1946-48.

In an April 2009 *Smoke Signals* story, Tom recalled playing baseball for the Grand Ronde Tribal team. He was in his teens, 15 or 16, and most of his teammates were in their mid-to-late 20s. "Everything to me was kind of serious," he said, "because I was playing with the big guys."



Tom's athleticism received interest from Oregon State University, the University of Washington and several California colleges, as well as from the National Football League's New York Giants, but he instead focused on his new family.

Chips married Marianne Kent and in 1948 they had their first child, Victoria. He then went to work in the timber industry. Over the course of the next five years, he and Marianne had three more children: Patricia, Michael and Kathleen.

Chips worked in the woods most of his life, retiring from Weimer Logging in 1990. He served on the Grand Ronde Tribal Council from 1991 through 1999 following in the footsteps of his ancestors — he was the third generation of Tribal chiefs — during a pivotal time as the Tribe decided to pursue gaming as a revenue-generating economic development option and opened Spirit Mountain Casino. In 1996, Chips was the top vote-getter in a Tribal Council election that saw 15 candidates seeking seats.

His emphasis has always been on our future natural resources, his passion for the outdoors and environmental issues were always in the forefront working with state and federal governments to protect our natural resources of water, fish and wildlife, timber and our lands. He said in his 1996 Tribal Council candidate statement: "It is important to provide the highest quality of education and health care. I attend as many Tribal children's activities as I can and enjoy the time getting acquainted with the children."

In addition to Tribal Council, he served on the Tribe's Timber Committee, the former Land Acquisition Committee and the Facility Design Committee for the Grand Ronde Health & Wellness Center.

In retirement, he enjoyed fishing, spending time with his family and watching all football, basketball and baseball games.

Survivors include his three daughters, Victoria Lawrence (David), former Tribal Council member Kathleen Tom-King (Louis) and Patricia Tom-Martin (John, deceased), and son, Michael Tom, all of Salem; six grandsons, Darrel Lawrence (Kristie), Justin Martin (Jennifer), Ryan Tom (Michelle), Mason Keppinger (Tiffany), Devin Lawrence and Caleb Tom (Susan); and 10 great-grandchildren.

He was a larger-than-life amazing man, friend to many and a force to be reckoned with. He was a legend in the woods, knowing where every logging road, trail, waterfall and old-growth timber was without the help of a GPS. He loved hard and played hard. His happiest moments were spent with family and friends, and at Tribal functions. A quiet man in so many ways, but when he spoke everybody had better be listening. He was funny, handsome and had a dry sense of humor. But most of all he was a man of high integrity with a love for his culture.

The recitation of the rosary was held at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 27, at St. Michael's Catholic Church in Grand Ronde. A funeral service was held at 10 a.m. Thursday, Dec. 28, in the Tribal gym, 9615 Grand Ronde Road, Grand Ronde. A meal at the Elders Activity Center, 48940 Blacktail Drive, Grand Ronde, followed his burial.

Assisting is Virgil T. Golden Funeral Service of Salem.

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