



Laurence Hohn

OCT 8, 1929 - JUL 26, 2016



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My grandfather was one of the best storytellers, he had a story for every occasion. It seems only natural to want to tell his story on this day that we come together to honor him.

Laurence George Hohn was known by many different names. Throughout the years, he responded to Laurence, Larry, Loren, Dad, Grandpa, and probably a couple others that I should not mention. To simplify things, we will refer to him as Laurence throughout this story because that is the name his parents gave him October 8, 1929 on the day of his birth in Mitchell, South Dakota.

Laurence faced adversity at a very young age. Before he could even learn to walk he contracted the very contagious, crippling and deadly disease Polio. In the 1930's Polio was a serious disease that crippled thousands of children, but Laurence was a fighter and in time, he proved that he could do any work that any other man could do... and then some. Throughout his life he worked many jobs, learned a few trades and enjoyed sharing his knowledge and working side by side with his three sons Randy, Gary and Larry. So, to say that Laurence was a man of many talents is an understatement.

In the early years he attended Catholic school where he met LaVern Schonfelder, they became lifelong friends. Laurence was known to be a prankster. He was always doing something to make people laugh and finding a way to get into trouble. I think I know of a few other "Hohn" boys that might have taken after their father or grandfather.

In the fall of 1949, at the young age of 20, Laurence decided he wanted to see the Country. So he went to Texas, then Oklahoma and it was there in Oklahoma City, while visiting his sister Lexie, that he met and fell in love with Bernece Maxine Harris. After what Bernece describes as a "whirl-wind" courtship they were married in a Catholic church in Oklahoma City on February 20, 1950. After the wedding they



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were off to South Dakota, where Laurence had rented the Titsie Farm, they lived on the farm for two years and it was during this time in 1951 that Randy, their oldest son was born. From there the family moved to Uncle Gregar's farm which is where the twins Darla and Carla were born in 1953. The farming situation was rough for a young guy just starting out. Laurence being the provider that he was, decided it was time for a change. In the spring of 1954 the family was off to Wichita, Kansas where Laurence was now employed by Boeing and it was during this time that his son Gary was born in the early part of 1955. The family didn't stay in Kansas long. Laurence's father encouraged him to return to South Dakota to help him on the Family farm, in the spring of 1956 Laurence gave in and returned to South Dakota. It was still a tough time to be a young farmer, so Laurence joined the Carpenter's Union which also didn't seem to provide much work for him at the time. So, he left the family farm and went to Yellowstone National Park to build. It was during this time late in 1956 that his son Larry was born. Laurence returned to pick up his family and move them to Montana where he was working, but in December when the weather got bad the job ended, so he moved his family to Tacoma, Washington where he was hired again by Boeing.

Laurence was employed by Boeing for a year, but didn't enjoy the work, so he quit. Being a man of many talents he found work as a carpenter, plumber or whatever else was being offered. Things were going pretty well until the spring of 1960.

Unemployment was high so jobs were hard to find. Once school let out it was time to head back East. All five of the Hohn children piled into a four door sedan, the only items that Bernece and Laurence brought with them to Missouri were the things that could fit in the car with them. Laurence was not a "pack rat" he started over everywhere he went. They now resided in the Kansas City area where Laurence found work as a plumber and carpenter. In the spring of 1964 Laurence opened his own plumbing shop in Missouri, which lasted a couple years. Right around the time when he was running out of work a friend called from Louisiana and asked for Laurence to come help rebuild in the area. In the summer of 1965, hurricane Betsy rolled through so there was plenty of work to be done. He loaded up the trunk with plumbing parts and set off for Louisiana, leaving his wife and children in Missouri to



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finish out the school year. Once arriving in Louisiana he opened his own plumbing shop and remained there for three years.

In the spring of 1969, Laurence moved back to Tacoma, Washington and joined the Plumber's Union. His family joined him a few months later. He worked through the union until 1974 and then he opened his own plumbing shop. He worked side by side with his son Larry, son-in-law Lloyd Rougutt and then in 1976 after getting out of the Army his son Randy joined in.

1977 and 1978 was a busy time for Laurence, he continued to run his plumbing shop but also started building houses. He was very busy and very successful during this time period, he somehow managed to build seventeen houses with the help of all three of his sons and his son-in-law Lloyd. Soon after, he ventured into the trucking business which didn't last long because he wasn't making the kind of money that he hoped to.

Laurence was a dreamer. One of his dreams included owning a tavern. Around December 1978 or the early part of 1979 he bought the "Gaslight Tavern" which unfortunately proved to be a real challenge and not very profitable. At times, Bernece and Randy would run the tavern while Laurence drove trucks. In 1980 Laurence found work again through the Plumber's union. He worked as a plumber by day and the tavern at night.

On October 15, 1981 Laurence was riding in the car with his son Larry when they were struck by a drunk driver. The entire family was devastated to learn of the death of his son and the extent of the injuries to Laurence, which took about 6 months to recover from. Laurence sold the tavern and continued to work as a plumber until he put plans in motion to soon retire.

By the middle of 1982, Laurence was fully retired. He and Bernece sold all of their possessions, even her fine China (that is when people knew they were serious about travelling). They joined the Good Sam's travelling club, which Laurence was very involved in. After travelling about five years or so, they bought a place at Nisqually Pines in Yelm, Washington. It is then that they started spending their summers in Washington and their winters in Arizona. During the summer, Laurence enjoyed having his family come visit him at the Pines. His grandkids Tobin, Tasha, Joey,



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Jamie, Mindi, Loren, Amanda, Larry, Nathalie and Gary would all love spending time with their “grandma and grandpa Hohn” especially on the days when we were allowed to swim in the Nisqually Pines Community Pool. One of Laurence’s proudest business transactions actually happened right there at the pines, he bought a place right there on the river for just a dollar! Over the years he made many friends and enjoyed his neighbors. Being the “Jack of All Trades” that he had obviously become he was able to pass the time by buying, fixing up and then selling different lots within Nisqually Pines. Sometimes he was able to recruit the grandkids to help out, which he loved because again he was able to share his knowledge with them. During their drive between Washington and Arizona they would almost always go visit family members before arriving at their seasonal destination. They continued to travel back and forth until the spring of 1995 when Bernece unexpectedly passed away. Laurence as you can imagine was devastated. His wife, the mother of his children, the woman who had become the “professional mover” was no longer able to be his companion and join him on all of his adventures.

Laurence met Ruby and he enjoyed her companionship, they married and travelled back and forth between Washington and Arizona. It was at this time that He became a “world traveler” when his adventures took him as far as Australia and New Zealand. Eventually, life took Laurence and Ruby in different directions and they parted ways. Anyone that knew Laurence would most likely describe him as “Young at Heart”. He enjoyed being around people and sharing his stories with them. He loved trying new restaurants, going to a Casino every now and then BUT there was nothing he loved more than starting a new project! Just as he would finish up one or almost have it complete he would have another project in the works. Around 2006 or 2007 he became a fulltime resident of Arizona, his health was slowing him down a bit, even if he wouldn’t admit it. It was during this time that he met Nancy, they had built a friendship and enjoyed each other’s company and married soon after. Laurence found ways to keep Nancy on her toes and she took care of him on his bad days. Even with his health slowly declining he still found a way to be on the move. He made it to some family reunions and different gatherings and even made his way back to the “family farm” in South Dakota to help with some projects.



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A couple things that you should have learned by now in this story, are that no one would have ever referred to Laurence as “the man of FEW words” and that Laurence loved to be on the “MOVE”. Even as he found it hard to walk at times in his final years he found a way to use his scooter to move plywood and other building materials because the work still needed to get done...and he was the man for the job! In the end of 2011, Laurence experienced heartache again when his daughter Carla Rougutt passed away. I imagine one of the hardest things in life is for a parent to bury a child. Laurence had to experience that feeling twice.

Within the last year Laurence’s health had become increasing bad. His son Randy, made many trips back and forth between Arizona and Washington. At times Randy was the companion that his father needed, but mostly he was a caretaker. The entire Hohn family appreciates Randy taking on this role and keeping everyone up to date on Laurence’s health.

On July 26, 2016 Laurence George Hohn took his final trip. A trip that would reunite him with many that he had loved and lost over the years. He joined his parents, Lawrence & Angela Hohn, wife, Bernece Hohn, two of his children, Larry Hohn & Carla Rougutt and three of his siblings; Alfred, Billie and Delores in Heaven where they are patiently waiting to reunite with us when our time comes. He is survived by his amazing older sister Lexie Schelp and three of his children; Randy Hohn, Darla Renn and Gary Hohn.

It is hard to believe all of the things Laurence accomplished in his 86 years. He was a busy man with a personality the same size as his hands, HUGE. It is safe to say that he left a lasting impression on anyone that he crossed paths with. He was loved, and he will be missed.

Written by: Nathalie (Hohn) Robertson
Granddaughter

Read by: Larry D. Hohn II
Grandson



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JJ

Janet Jones posted:

I somehow missed Larry's obituary last August. I'm so sorry I wasn't there to give my condolences in person. I was just a teenager when the Hohn's moved in just across and down the street on So. 62nd St. in Tacoma, and their house was the place to be for fun and great times! So many great memories, like the time Larry sent the boys around the neighborhood to invite everyone over for "roastin' ears". What a great time we had. I will always remember Larry and the Hohn family for being so welcoming.....their door was always open. So sorry for your loss. Janet Jones

February 28 at 6:39 PM

MH

Michelle Hill posted:

I worked for Larry and Bernece at the Gaslight Tavern in 1980. In those days, they had a live country band and the place was packed most weekends. I was working the night one of the Army Rangers told one of the bikers that his hair was too long. The fight was on! Larry and Bernece were in the middle of that ruckus. Neither Larry nor Bernece were people to mess with. That night was the scariest and the most fun I have ever had. We used to go to Paradise Bowling Alley after work and have breakfast. I respected Larry and Bernece. My folks also owned a tavern and we had a lot to talk about. They were genuine folks who said what they meant, and meant what they said. My deepest condolences to the Hohn family.

August 27 at 8:01 AM

KY

Ken & Diane Young posted:

So sorry Gary, Liz, and family. Losing someone so close to your heart is never easy - it is always the ones left behind that suffer. Just no he is with God now and all of your other beloved family, friends, and pets. Love you guys! Ken & Diane

August 25 at 3:45 AM

NH

Nancy Hohn shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

Thank you for all the memories. You will never be forgotten. Love Nancy

August 24 at 3:50 AM





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Sharon Sands posted:

Laurence was one of a kind. I have so fond many memories. One memory took place in 1994. My parents, Rita & Earl Sands, were wintering in AZ, next to Laurence. My dad was really sick and I was there helping my mom. The doctor told mom it was time to get my dad home to Washington. Laurence said pack up the motor home we are leaving in about an hour. Mom and I packed as fast as we could. Laurence started the motor home and off we went. He drove all day and night to get dad home. It was one of the wildest rides mom and I ever experienced. But he was that kind of man; he could do anything. Sending my love to our family. I will miss you Loren. Love, Sharon

August 20 at 10:47 AM



Liz Hohn August 24 at 5:59 PM

Thanks Sharon for sharing this



Kristina Osborn shared an album called **Photos**.



August 19 at 9:05 AM



Media

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Nancy Hohn shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

August 24 at 3:50 AM





Kristina Osborn shared 3 photos to the **Photos** album.

August 19 at 9:05 AM





Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Laurence by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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