



**J**ohn Duncan Kerr, 92, of proud Scottish descent, a husband, father, uncle, friend, worm fisherman, shipping executive, and volunteer, passed away May 11, 2008 in Bozeman, Montana. He was born December 20, 1915 in St. Paul, Minnesota, one of five children. His father, Duncan John Kerr, was born in Scotland and emigrated to this country to become a railroad man, first with Burlington and finally with Great Northern, running a sawmill in Somers, Montana and a coal mine in Great Falls, Montana in the 1930's as part of the railroad operation. This meant that John grew up during the summers near Bigfork, Montana at the family summer home on Echo Lake, horseback riding, wood chopping, including taking a finger off – thus his Blackfoot name of “aims poor with a tomahawk,” fishing, canoeing, and playing practical jokes such as leaving a large domestic goose in a darkened cabin for an unsuspecting brother. He attended high school at St. Paul's Academy in St. Paul, then on to Yale University in New Haven, CT, with a BS in Applied Economics.

John served in the US Navy from June 1944 to May 1946, finally honorably discharged from the Navy Reserve in November 1958. He was proud of his country.

He started as a shipping clerk for Bethlehem Steel and spent forty years with that company, retiring as Vice President of the Shipping Division, or Water Transportation Subsidiaries. Following this retirement, he worked six years for a barge company on the Mississippi. During John's years in the shipping and steel industry, he resided in New York, Baltimore, Maryland, and Nassau, Bahamas.

John met Marion Conboy and married her on June 16, 1945 in New York City. They had three children, Connie, Patty, and Duncan.

John put his creative talents and energy during retirement into a myriad of things. He purchased two buggies and restored them with Marion's help, and delivered them to Bozeman, Montana. John and Marion decided these trips were too long and so moved to Bozeman in 1986 where their two daughters lived. John endured heart bypass surgery and aneurisms and went on to volunteer at Bozeman Deaconess as a Red Coat, always saying he felt better after a day there helping others who were less well off than he was. He put in over 2000 hours doing this service, a good part spent working with his son-in-law, Dave Norton. John also volunteered at the Museum of the Rockies as a docent, loving the sharing with young and old people there, and gave them 1984 hours of his time from 1990 to 2005 when he was recognized with “Docent Emeritus.” He loved assisting at his church, St. James Episcopal, as a lay reader, and always practiced his readings in the garage at home just to make sure he was perfect on the following Sunday. He became an initial inductee to the Order of St. James for Meritorious Service, and his picture is in the hall of the church. His church supported him with love and many visits in his last years after his stroke.

John loved many things and he drove his buggies in parades, usually with his son-in-law, Allan Lien. He loved to ride horses to high mountain lakes to fish, taking great delight in making neurotic family fishing dogs. No limits for John Kerr! Practical jokes remained in his repertoire with gifting peacocks to a daughter; planning extensive family get-togethers for the daughters to host, including his own 50<sup>th</sup> and 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversaries. Rocks from his yard were always delivered with a smile and a promise of more to come. Flower bulbs were given in the fall on the last sunny frost-free day with the admonishment, “get them planted.” (sigh)

In the years since his stroke in April of 2005, John demonstrated that part of his nature that was highest and best. His smile and thoughts for others were always there. He loved all his nurses and aides and he never forgot to say, “thank you” or give his daughter, Patty, absolute fits as he yelled, “help” to any stranger in the area. He would giggle after he did this for maximum effect. He noticed if visitors or caregivers had new boyfriends and was interested in their lives and families. In early years, he would have poured you a “wee dram” but recently it was Dove chocolate to send you on your way.

John is survived by his three children, Connie (Allan) Lien of Bozeman; Patty Norton of Belgrade, MT, and John Duncan (Cheryl) Kerr, Jr. and grandchildren, Elisabeth and Alexander, of Laurel, Maryland.