



Michael John Watson

September 29, 1952 - May 22, 2024

Michael John Watson was born in Riverside, California, at the Air Force base on September 29, 1952. His father had just served a tour of duty in Korea and the Korean war was just coming to an end. They moved to San Francisco soon after Michael's birth and they all enjoyed living in San Francisco. His father became an accountant for Standard Oil and his mother became a clerk at UCSF Hospital. Michael started elementary school in his neighborhood of Twin Peaks and went on to become lifelong friends with Ricky Montalvan and Larry Cressey, two chums that he met before high school. One of whom he met in elementary school, and the other one he met in junior high school. He also had a high school chum who was also a friend for life, named David Subke.

While he was still in San Francisco he had a paper route delivering the San Francisco Chronicle. He loved reading the sports section of the Chronicle all his life, as he was very faithful to two sports teams that he "grew up with", the San Francisco Giants and the 49ers. Later, he became a fan of the Golden State Warriors as well. He would always fly their flag on his truck during the playoffs.

Also, while he lived in SF, Michael earned his nickname. He started surfing at a fairly young age (Jr. High) down at the beach near the San Francisco zoo. He went with some surfing buddies and it wasn't long before they started calling him "The Walrus" because of his ability to withstand cold water. Eventually, by his high school years, that name was stretched to "Wally the

Walrus" , and that has been who he was ever since.

He played the trumpet in the school band in elementary, jr. high school, and into high school. He attended Lowell High School, SFs finest high school, especially for musicians. During his Senior year at Lowell High School, he went to Japan with the Lowell High School Orchestra. They were all great musicians, and they played all over Japan. Wally always said his claim to fame were his performances in Japan. The Japanese people truly loved these high school virtuosos' talent in music. Later on, his interest in music would continue, and he practiced and played his horn for over 20 years. In the town of Somes Bar, CA, he played in a band with Tina Marier's River Bar Community Band. It was with this little group that Wally helped to premiere a piece of music written especially for them. It was called the Klamath River Suite, composed by David Subke, Wally's high school chum who had joined the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra and he also became a composer. When he was nineteen he came up to Forks of Salmon with his buddy, Rick Montalvan, to visit Larry Cressey, who had apprenticed with an old mountain man and gold miner named Manuel "Mike" DeFaria. Mike taught them all just about everything a person would need to know to become self-sufficient in the mountains. Although Wally's dad took him hunting and fishing as a boy and he already knew a bit about guns and hunting. Mike taught him how to hunt bear, elk, deer and game birds grouse and turkeys. He learned how to render bear fat and how to waterproof his shoes with it.... he also learned a lot about creating gravity water systems and gardening his own vegetables. He mastered all of this well before his death. After this visit to Forks of Salmon, he never moved back to SF. He lived at a place called the Hansen Mine, located 1 mile up from the forks of Know Nothing Creek which is close to where his wife first met him at Forks of Salmon. Know Nothing Creek is a tributary of the Salmon River. Edna and her son Ricky became close neighbors to him in February of 1974. And by summer of that year, they were all living together in a little cabin at the forks of Know Nothing Creek. Wally and Edna had their son Woody by November of 1975, at the same little cabin

and you could say they lived happily ever after. Wally and Edna loved life in the mountains and never wanted to live anywhere else.

Wally was always an avid fisherman. In 1974 he started working in Somes Bar for the Throgmorton family as a guide for the Somes Bar Lodge. He also was a logger for a couple of years as well as a tree planter for ENT forestry. Not before long he became a partner with Jody Pullen, in what would become his own business, Klamath River Outfitters. Initially he specialized as a top steelhead fishing guide. Later in 1983, the family moved to Somes Bar, where they all could still pursue their dreams of mountain living and where Wally practiced his expertise of carpentry and built their beautiful family home. This is where Wally lived out the rest of his life.

Wally pioneered Wing rafts on the Salmon River. He was also one of the first people to go commercial rafting on the Salmon. For the next fifty years he fished and rafted the Salmon and Klamath Rivers faithfully as a top guide. His wife Edna taught for thirty-two years at Junction Elementary School, first as the upper grade teacher for 19 years and then as a special education teacher for the county of Siskiyou, and her route included Junction School in Somes Bar. Wally also stayed busy at Junction School, where he became a Little League Coach for almost 20 years, joined by Toz Soto and Brandon Tripp. Wally loved coaching baseball, and one of the proudest moments of his life was when his team, the Somes Bar Cougars, won a trophy for being undefeated the whole season. Wally also loved taking kids rafting. Throughout his life it is likely he took most of the kids in Somes Bar rafting.

Wally died on May 22nd, 2024, from a horrible brain tumor called a Glioblastoma, that had only been diagnosed about 10 days prior to his death. Luckily for Wally, his death was peaceful and painfree, and he was surrounded by his wife and other loved ones.

Wally was predeceased by his mother, Patricia Watson, his father Jerry Albert Watson, all his grandparents, paternal, Albert and Jennifer Watson, maternal, John Murphy and Norine Guerin Murphy, and his brother, Tim Watson, who

was 24 when he died on Know Nothing Creek Road in 1983. Sadly, Woody predeceased Wally in May of 2020. Wally was also predeceased by his 1st cousin, Cherolee Slinger and her parents, his aunt and uncle, Chet and Evaline Slinger. He was also predeceased by his good friends, Wayne Glascoe, Dave Subke, Les Harling, and Lloyd Ingle. Wally is survived by his loving wife, Edna Watson and her-son, Rick Glascoe, and Rick's four children, Brandi Grimm and son Dylan, Angelica Hokanson and husband Mitch and their two children Hudson and Cash, Buck Wayne Glascoe age 18, and then Rick's youngest daughter Eva May Glascoe age 16. Wally is also survived by Woody's children; Tim Watson, age 21, Virusur Watson, age 20 and Patty Watson, age 12, and their mother, Alicia Whitman and her other children, Layla Aubrey, age 10, and Layla's brother and sister Laina and Joaquin both age 14, as well as Luis Osario, age 18. Wally is also survived by many friends, who over the years have been like extended family.

HE WILL BE GREATLY MISSED BY MANY. "White Water Wally the Walrus, you are Boat Man Extraordinaire!" There will be a Celebration of Life Memorial service for Wally, to be held at Ti Bar Campground in Somes Bar, on Sunday, July 21, 2024 starting at noon. Everyone is welcome. Look for local flyers or on Facebook for more info, or call Edna. It is a potluck.

Tribute Wall



“ 9 files added to the album *Obituary Wall*



Girdner Funeral Chapel - April 27 at 03:40 PM

MR

“ *Michael John Watson*

Monty Ricktalvan - August 22, 2024 at 12:00 AM

MR

“ *Michael John Watson*

Monty Ricktalvan - August 22, 2024 at 12:00 AM

KP

“ *Wow what an amazing life well lived. Prayers for his family.*

Kathy Sherman Preszler - July 14, 2024 at 12:00 AM

AW

“ *We are deeply sorry for your loss ~ Girdner Funeral Chapel*

A Memorial Tree was planted for Michael John Watson - July 12, 2024 at 12:00 AM