

Eulogy for Weston H. Price

1918 – 2000

Oliver Wendell Holmes once said, “The riders in a race do not stop when they reach the goal. There is a little finishing canter before coming to a standstill. There is time to hear the kind voices of friends and say to oneself, ‘The work is done.’”

Sadly, the work of Weston H. Price is done. As a testament to the man he was we should pause for a moment to mourn his passing, canter a bit and speak of him in kind voices.

For many of us there is an urge to measure the girth of our lives in terms of accomplishments and milestones. In Wes’ life there were many such events that are a part of public record, and the private places in our hearts and minds. Without elevating him in death over what he was in life, I would like to mention a few milestones of Wes Price that are right to remember.

In his youth, Wes was an outstanding athlete playing football at R.A. Long High School and later at Whitman College near Walla Walla. It was at Whitman that he earned the Niles Trophy as the “outstanding player of the year” and was named to the Little All-American Team. I remember stories of his college summers where he would take jobs cutting and hauling logs out of the forest or unloading boxcars to keep in shape. To fuel his physical training he would sometimes eat an entire loaf of bread in sandwiches, half a pie and wash it down with a quart of milk.

After college graduation in 1940 Wes enlisted in the Air Force where he served his country with honor and distinction. As a bomber pilot during World War II he flew the B-17, B-24 and B-29 on dangerous missions over Asia. After 27 years in the Air Force Wes retired in 1968 with the rank of Colonel. Those of us from younger generations who enjoy the fruits of sacrifice by men like Wes would do well to calculate the cost of freedom so easily spent. I think it was Winston Churchill who once said, “Never in the history of mankind has so much been owed by so many to so few.” We owe our free and comfortable lives to men like Weston Price.

Now, all of us have passions and Wes was no exception. He loved to fly airplanes, play golf, play the organ, line dance, and fish, among other things. It was on a fishing trip to Neah Bay many years ago that Wes shared with me the experience of life as a commercial fisherman. Getting up at 4am, cutting bait, tying hooks, steering a boat in rough seas with four lines out the back, cleaning fish (lots of fish) and learning all the interesting ways to prepare salmon and cod that were too small for the canneries to buy. We had fish omelets, fish sandwiches, fish casserole, fish filets, fish-on-a-shingle, fish helper, fish in fish sauce, and my favorite, fish surprise. Wes made sure my fishing experience was complete, from the top button to the bottom.

Although some of us Y-chromos would not readily admit it, a man’s gentler soul is framed in the context of his relationships with women – mother, sisters, wife, daughters. As I remember his mother Ethyl Price, she was a dignified woman who was very proud of her son. His charming sisters Bonnie, Dee and Betsy took pride in a big brother who was a star athlete and World War II pilot. His beautiful and gracious wife Lou complemented his life over many years through thick and thin. And not least of all is his lovely and intelligent daughter Patty, the apple of his eye. With influencing natures such as these it is no wonder he was the gentle giant we all loved.

I think it fare to say that most of the sadness felt today is a result of our fond memories of Wes. We will miss him in our lives. We could also say that the expression of sadness at the loss of someone who lived a full and complete life is a far better thing than to mourn the passing of a life that was incomplete in some fashion. As for me, there is no doubt that Wes led a remarkable and substantial life.

With his canter finished, his work done, in a kind voice say farewell to Weston Price.

Jeffrey Liekhus

Nephew of Weston H. Price