

John Earl Drumheller, a retired MSU physics professor and loving husband and father, died peacefully at his Bridger Canyon home Saturday, Oct. 6, in the presence of his wife and three children.

John Earl (Jack) Drumheller Jr., was born Dec. 19, 1931 in Walla Walla, WA, the son of Geraldine Lola (Golleson) Drumheller and John Earl Drumheller. When he turned seven, Jack's family moved to Spokane, WA. His father died in 1948, when Jack was 16 years old. The loss of his father drove Jack to take his studies and life more seriously. Jack graduated from Lewis and Clark High School in 1949 and joined the ROTC in college, attending Washington State University in Pullman, WA. In high school and college, Jack was active in the choir and chorus, and sang with a barbershop quartet. He was a member of the Tau Kappa Epsilon fraternity and graduated from WSU with a Bachelors of Science degree with Honors in physics in 1953.

Upon graduation, Jack worked a short stint at Douglas Aircraft Co. as a systems engineer in Santa Monica, Calif., and attended classes at UCLA. He also worked as a research engineer for Kaiser Aluminum in Trentwood, WA. He served in the Air Force at Lowry AFB from 1954 to 1956, where he was a special weapons officer. He resigned his commission and was honorably discharged in 1962 with the rank of First Lieutenant. While in Denver, Jack met Patricia Louise (Patty) Weiss. They married in 1956, and settled in Boulder, CO., where Jack attended graduate school, and where Patricia worked as an operating room nurse. Jack earned his Masters of Science in 1958 and Ph.D. in physics in 1962 from the University of Colorado. Jack and Patty moved their young family to Zurich, Switzerland, for two years where Jack was a post-doctoral research associate at the University of Zurich. While in Zurich, they purchased a VW bus and had many adventures traveling Europe with their three children, including a trip to East Berlin during the height of the Cold War.

In 1964, they moved back to the U.S., where Jack took a position as a physics professor at Montana State University in Bozeman. He was a professor and researcher, specializing in solid state experimental physics, and won many teaching and research awards during his tenure at MSU. He served as Dean of the College of Letters and Sciences from 1991 to 1995 and as Interim Provost 1995-1996. He retired in 1998 with the rank of Professor Emeritus of Physics.

In 1968 the family settled in Bridger Canyon, close to Bridger Bowl where Jack and Patty served on the volunteer ski patrol. Jack also enjoyed tennis, basketball, golf and playing piano. Having learned to fly at Felts Field in Spokane in his youth, Jack continued his love of flying from Gallatin Field. He piloted single and twin-engine airplanes, as well as sport gliders, and enjoyed sailing over the Bridger Mountains. In the 1990s, he worked briefly as a co-pilot for corporate aircraft.

Jack traveled widely, professionally and for fun, with Switzerland, Scotland and Greece among his favored destinations. In 2008, Jack lost Patty to cancer after 52 years of marriage. A year later, Jack reconnected with a WSU college sweetheart, Valerie Violet (Leber) Keyes. Jack and Valerie were married in 2010, and spent just two short years

together before Jack lost his long battle with cancer. Jack will be remembered by his friends and family as a generous and loving soul who shared his great intellect and good humor with everyone.

Jack is survived by his wife, Valerie Drumheller, sister Joan Dillon of Thayne, Wyo., three children; Susan Drumheller of Sandpoint, Idaho, Kristen Drumheller of Bozeman, and John Drumheller of Erie, Colo.; sons-in-law Mike Murray and Bill Dockins; daughter-in-law Linda Drumheller; grandchildren Megan Murray, Erin Dockins and J.D. Drumheller; step sons and daughters-in-law Nathan and Rae Keyes of Seattle, Wash., Forrest and Jennifer Keyes of Duvall, Wash., Ken and Kathy Keyes of Baku, Azerbaijan; and their children, Daniel, Zachary and Hannah Keyes of Seattle and Maxim and Marat Keyes of Baku; and niece Gail Godenzi, her husband, Lance Godenzi, and their children Loni and Claire of Kailua, HI.

In remembrance of Jack Drumheller, a memorial service will be held at 4 p.m. Oct. 27 at Dokken-Nelson Funeral Chapel, 113 S. Willson Ave. with a reception immediately following at the family's home. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made in Jack's memory to the Physics Department Scholarship Fund, EPS Building, MSU, Bozeman, MT 59717.