



Berkley Warren Bedell

March 5, 1921 - December 7, 2019

Berkley Warren Bedell, age 98, passed away on December 7, 2019 three days after suffering a massive stroke in Naples, FL. A third generation of Spirit Lake, IA, he was born on March 5, 1921. Growing up with two loving parents, Walter and Virginia Bedell and a younger brother, Jack, his life was filled with fishing, hunting, and hanging out with the South Side Gang – a harmless group of neighborhood friends who loved fishing, hunting and the magical life in a small town surrounded by lakes and wildlife.

In 1937, while still in high school, he began tying fishing flies and selling them in a local tackle shop. With the encouragement of his family, his natural entrepreneurial instincts encouraged him to develop fishing leaders and the beginning of what became Berkley & Co. He attended Iowa State University where he met the love of his life, Elinor Healy. He continued his fishing tackle business until World War II called. Joining the Army Air Corps, he became a flight instructor. Elinor and Berkley were married August 29, 1943.

After the war, Berk and Elinor returned to Spirit Lake and restarted Berkley & Co which grew rapidly. From Steelon leaders to Trilene fishing line, Berkley's inventiveness introduced new and better products into the fishing tackle market, enabling him to employ hundreds of local people and home workers. The company expanded into multiple locations – finally consolidating into a new factory building on highway 71 where it remains today. In 1964 he has

honored by President Lyndon Johnson as the country's first Small Businessman of the Year. Berks was inducted into the Fresh Water Fishing Hall of Fame, the Bass Fishing Hall of Fame, and the Iowa Business Hall of Fame.

Berkley was active in community affairs. He was a member of the Spirit Lake United Methodist Church, a founding member of the Spirit Lake Kiwanis Club and a Mason. He served on the Spirit Lake School Board. Many people will recall his mentorship as a Boy Scout leader, the record number of Eagle Scouts and the annual canoe trips to the Boundary Waters.

Berk served as the president of the American Fishing Tackle Manufacturing Association, and the Iowa Manufacturing Association. He was active in the Young Presidents Organization. He served on the Board of Trustees of Morningside College, American University, and Claremont School of Theology.

In 1974 he was elected to represent Iowa's 6th District in the US Congress. He served for twelve years until his retirement in 1987 because he contracted Lyme's disease. In Congress he served on the Agriculture Committee and chaired the Small Business Committee. He also represented the United States on the UN Convention on Law of the Seas.

When his health returned, he lobbied Congress to establish an Office of Alternative Medicine (OAM) in the National Institutes of Health. He served on the advisory board. Becoming frustrated that OAM did not aggressively consider alternate medical practices, he founded the Foundation for Alternative and Integrative Medicine in 1998 which continues today.

Berkley contributed in countless ways to the quality of life in the Iowa Great Lakes from co-leading the Save The Park funding drive for Arnolds Park, to being a founding member of the Okoboji Foundation. He and Elinor

contributed land to create Elinor Bedell State Park in Spirit Lake , Iowa.

While being remembered for his achievements, most people think of Berk for his leadership, his kindness, his compassion and his activeness to make a difference – not just in big causes, but in individual people’s lives. He was alive with empathy and always ready to take on injustice.

Berkley was preceded in death by his wife of 73 years, Elinor Healy Bedell, his brother, Jack Bedell, and his parents, Virginia and Walter Bedell. He is survived by three children, Ken Bedell (Kathie) of Westminster, CO, Tom Bedell (Molly) of Bend, OR, and Joanne Quinn (Mike) of Loveland, CO, eight grandchildren and twelve great grandchildren.

Visitation and Memorial arrangements had been planned for July 24 and 25 in Spirit Lake, Iowa, his lifelong home. Due to health concerns with gatherings, the memorial has been canceled.

A website has been created, www.berkleybedell.com for family and friends to share their stories, photos and videos of the special times each of us spent with Berkley/Dad. Please share a posting in memory of Berkley. Instructions are included on the site. We look forward to hearing from you.

If people would like to communicate directly with family members:

Ken Bedell: kbedell@civilrightsdream.net

Tom Bedell: tombedell@twooldhippies.com

Jo Quinn: jobquinn@gmail.com

Tribute Wall

EL

“ *Eileen Lamer lit a candle in memory of Berkley Warren Bedell*



Eileen Lamer - December 20, 2019 at 03:09 PM

JT

“ *My deep condolences and sincere gratitude to Berkley and his family. We served together in Congress . He as a good man. He lived a fine life.*

*Jim Guy Tucker
2d District Arkansas*

Jim Guy Tucker - December 18, 2019 at 05:02 PM

BW

“ *Bev And Vern Wittler lit a candle in memory of Berkley Warren Bedell*



Bev and Vern Wittler - December 15, 2019 at 07:06 PM

DB

“ *My sympathy to your family.*

Dayle Broocks



Dayle Broocks - December 14, 2019 at 11:06 AM

KP

“ *Kathy Perkins lit a candle in memory of Berkley Warren Bedell*



Kathy Perkins - December 13, 2019 at 08:22 AM

MJ

“ *Michelle Farmer Janasko lit a candle in memory of Berkley Warren Bedell*



Michelle Farmer Janasko - December 11, 2019 at 12:02 PM

CR

“ *Fond memories of Berk and Elinor and family. Very simply, nice people.*
Carl Ross

Carl Ross - December 11, 2019 at 09:42 AM



“ A friend to everyone he met. Berk will always be remembered for his love of others. He recently sent me an email telling me of his father's dealings with the bootleggers who lived at 604 11th St. He encouraged me to write a book about the characters that had lived there, and the history of the place. A home in which we will soon live. We call it Angie's house. Berk was always ready to give a helping hand to anyone in need. Well done good and faithful servant. God blessed us when he designed you. May we all live up to the quality of your convictions. Rest in peace, dear friend.



Kathleen Shaw - December 10, 2019 at 07:11 PM

PT

“ Paula Tietz lit a candle in memory of Berkley Warren Bedell



Paula Tietz - December 10, 2019 at 05:21 PM



“ Gary Kastrup lit a candle in memory of Berkley Warren Bedell



Gary Kastrup - December 10, 2019 at 01:49 PM

JF

“ *Judy Forbes lit a candle in memory of Berkley Warren Bedell*



Judy Forbes - December 10, 2019 at 11:18 AM

JO

“ *Jim O'Neill lit a candle in memory of Berkley Warren Bedell*



Jim O'Neill - December 10, 2019 at 10:12 AM

LK

“ *Linda Klein lit a candle in memory of Berkley Warren Bedell*



Linda Klein - December 10, 2019 at 09:27 AM

VU

“ *Extending sympathy to the entire Bedell family and especially our classmates Tom and Dick..*

On behalf of the SLHS Class of 1968.

Vern Underwood - December 10, 2019 at 09:13 AM

NR

“ *Nancy Rees lit a candle in memory of Berkley Warren Bedell*



Nancy Rees - December 10, 2019 at 12:18 AM

FK

“ *Fred Kaminska lit a candle in memory of Berkley Warren Bedell*



Fred Kaminska - December 09, 2019 at 07:32 PM

LJ

“ *Larry Jansen lit a candle in memory of Berkley Warren Bedell*



Larry Jansen - December 09, 2019 at 07:12 PM

MJ

“ *Mary Jansen lit a candle in memory of Berkley Warren Bedell*



mary jansen - December 09, 2019 at 07:09 PM

NR

“ Nancy Rickman sent a virtual gift in memory of Berkley Warren Bedell



Nancy Rickman - December 09, 2019 at 07:07 PM

JH

“ Johnny Huntsinger lit a candle in memory of Berkley Warren Bedell



Johnny Huntsinger - December 09, 2019 at 06:27 PM

KK

“ Kent & Jo Kastrup sent a virtual gift in memory of Berkley Warren Bedell



Kent & Jo Kastrup - December 09, 2019 at 06:21 PM

MH

“ TJ will always remember working side by side with Berk when he first started In Industrial wiring. He was one boss in a million always looking out for his employees and knew all of them by name. We send our deepest sympathy

TJ and Maxine Huntsinger

Maxine Huntsinger - December 09, 2019 at 05:58 PM

BA

“ Beverly Atwell lit a candle in memory of Berkley Warren Bedell



Beverly Atwell - December 09, 2019 at 05:24 PM

RB

“ I will always have fond memories of Berk. May God Bless and keep his family in his loving arms during this time.



Rosemary Booth - December 09, 2019 at 03:24 PM

PB

“ Paul Bakke lit a candle in memory of Berkley Warren Bedell



Paul bakke - December 09, 2019 at 01:29 PM

PB

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Paul bakke - December 09, 2019 at 01:29 PM