



## Harald Riise

August 23, 1937 - November 8, 2021

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Leavenworth, Washington

Harald Riise, devoted husband, father, uncle, grandfather, great grandfather, building contractor and professional ski coach/instructor passed away on Monday November 8, 2021, in Leavenworth, WA from stomach cancer. He was 84 years old.

Harald was born in Strandebarm, Norway to Hakon and Betsy Riise on August 23, 1937. Harald's father died when he was 4 years old and during his growing up years Harald and his siblings had to help their single mother work on the family farm. They grew mostly root vegetables, tended to the orchard and raised livestock. Even though Harald was young, he vividly remembered the German occupation of his local town and how the family farm's yield had to be sold for essentials such as flour and sugar. These experiences helped develop his extremely strong work ethic. He often spoke of the old Norwegian saying "arbeidsglede" which roughly translates to "finding peace and happiness in the work you do". Winters on the farm, however, meant less work and more time for outdoor fun like skiing. Harald became a skilled cross-country skier, downhill skier and ski jumper. In fact, when Harald was in his teens, he became an unbeatable ski jumper, often out jumping athletes in 2-3

age classes above his own. After graduating from school in 1952, he served an apprenticeship in his grandfather's furniture and boat building business. In 1955, at the age of 18, he emigrated to Seattle, Washington.

After Harald emigrated to Seattle, Ballard to be exact, he continued to ski on weekends and worked as a cabinet maker. He even built his own waterski boat from scratch so he could keep skiing through the summer! His passion for skiing led him into a very competitive side career as an amateur level alpine ski racer and ski coach. He worked as a ski coach and ski instructor at Stevens Pass for most of his life, working for various organizations like Art Audet Ski School, Stevens Pass Alpine Club, Olympic Ski School, Bob Hall Ski School, and Stevens Pass Ski and Snowboard School. He was a member of Professional Ski Instructors of America for over 50 years. In the 1980's and 1990's Harald was also very involved in donating a lot of time to the Leavenworth Winter Sports Club. He was President of the club for a number of years and played an instrumental role along with a few other Norwegians, Wally Aunan, Kjell Bakke, and Liv Nurman in creating a stronger youth Nordic ski training program within the club that also included Nordic Ski Jumping as part of the curriculum. It was during those years that the club also spearheaded building a new Nordic ski jump behind the old lodge. He was also a part of bringing back ski jumping competitions to the Leavenworth ski hill.

According to Harald, one of his greatest accomplishments was becoming a building contractor. He was especially proud of that fact, particularly because he came to this country with not much more than a hundred dollars to his name and maybe was able to speak only a few words of English. After working in a cabinet shop in Ballard for 5 years, he shifted gears toward building houses. He learned this trade from his uncle Henry Svasand and eventually went off on his own. He partnered with his friend Sven Jonassen and started a company by the name of "J and R Homes." Harald and Sven

developed many neighborhoods and built hundreds of homes in the Bothell-Woodenville area Northeast of Seattle, during the 1970's.

Harald was also in the United States Army and was Honorably discharged in 1966. After his time in the U.S Army he studied hard to become a United States Citizen, as well.

His number one accomplishment, though, was meeting and marrying his wife Sharedythe (Share') and having a family. They met folk dancing at "Norway Center" in 1962 and were married in 1964. They loved to dance together and were very well known for clearing a floor at weddings or any other event that included dancing. They lived in Norway for a year from 1966-67 and taught skiing at Geilo Ski Resort as well. Harald and Share' were very active people. Athletic endeavors were high on their list of what they enjoyed doing together, especially skiing, hiking in the mountains, fly fishing, bird hunting, running and cycling. They had two children together: Nils-Erik born in 1969 and Kirsten born in 1970. Harald was a very devoted husband and family man. He and Share' were very proud that he was able to provide for his family the way that he did and that Share' was able to stay at home and focus on raising the kids.

In 1978, Harald and Share' bought a small 4.5-acre orchard property in Leavenworth, Washington, and moved the family from Bothell to Leavenworth in the summer of 1980. They had been dreaming of that moment since their honeymoon in Easter Washington. They built their lives in Leavenworth on the love they had for each other and the love they had for this new place they would forever call home. Harald set up shop as a general contractor in Leavenworth and proceeded to build more than 60 homes and numerous commercial buildings in town over the last 42 years. He also filled his time with becoming an orchardist. He completely re-planted his property with mostly D'Anjou and Bartlett pears in the 1980's. His last major undertaking as

a fruit grower was planting over 500 blueberry plants back in 2008. His berries have become quite famous at the local fruit stands and among friends and family. In some years, his special berries approach the size of cherries and are the best tasting berries you can find anywhere.

Harald Riise was 100% self-made, from the bottom up, beginning to end. He lived his life on his own terms, did things the way he wanted, and he did them very well. He always was one to think outside the box and was very clever at figuring out the most challenging problems when it came to complicated building projects. He became known for taking on large, complicated jobs that other contractors would routinely turn down. A common quote heard around the jobsite was, "If you can move it an inch, you can move it a mile!" In addition to being a hard worker, he played even harder. He and his family loved to ski every weekend at Stevens Pass. He was also a very avid upland bird hunter. Chucker's were his favorite bird to hunt, and he had a pretty hard-core reputation for being quite the mountain goat when chasing birds. He loved his German Shorthair Pointers and was known for breeding them as well. His dogs were very well known for their visibility in the field (white with brown heads) and their uncanny ability to hold birds anywhere for as long as it took for the hunters to get caught up to them. If you planned to go hunting with Harald, you always knew you were in for an adventurous hunt and an exciting time with his dogs.

If all that wasn't enough, he also had a love for Harley Davidson Motorcycles. In 1990 he purchased his first bike. It was a 1989 Heritage Softail. He spent a lot of time modifying the bike and had it custom airbrushed with ancient Nordic mythological characters, like "Thor," the god of thunder one side of the gas tank and horseback riding Valkyries on the other side. Harald and his Harley, nicknamed, "Odin," became quite well known in the Harley Davidson community in the Wenatchee Valley. Harald and Share' rode that bike back to Sturgis many times over the years, as well as going on countless road trips

around the Western United States. Those were some good years back then. He loved the open road and camping under the stars next to his wife and his bike.

Harald should be remembered for his unbelievable work ethic, his passion for sport, his love of the great outdoors, his silly sense of humor, his penchant for practical jokes, his honesty, and his devotion to his family. He was a wise and practical man and was loved by everyone who came to know him. He will be greatly missed.

May Harald rest in peace, ride endless roads, ski eternal fields of powder, hunt perpetual coveys of Chukar, and build magnificent castles in heaven. Thank you, Harald, for showing us all what a life well lived looks like. Big love to you Harald!!!

Harald was preceded in death by his parents Hakon and Betsy; and stepfather, Anfin Hanoy and older brother Jan Riise. He is survived by his wife, Sheredythe Riise; 3 other siblings still living in Norway, Knut Riise, Karen Borge, and Berit Berland; children, Nils-Erik Riise (Jana Zediker) and Kirsten Kimber (James Kimber); grandchildren, Anona Riise Haley, Mercedes Goble (Thomas Goble), Virginia Trigg; great grandchildren, Vienna Goble, and Annika Goble.

Friday December 3, @ 1:00, a "Celebration of Life" memorial will be held in the "Chapel" at Sleeping Lady Mountain Resort with a reception to follow in the "Salmon Gallery." Keep in mind that we are still living in COVID times, so please, in the interest of personal safety and the consideration of the safety of others we ask all who plan to attend to please wear a mask and be mindful of physical distancing. If you would prefer not to attend the memorial due to potential crowding, please feel free to attend the reception following the memorial from 3 to 5 p.m. Graveside burial and other arrangements made by

Heritage Memorial Chapel in East Wenatchee, WA. You're invited to view Harald's memorial website at [www.HeritageMemorialChapel.com](http://www.HeritageMemorialChapel.com) where you can share a memory.

In lieu of sending flowers please send a donation to the Leavenworth Winter Sports Club. Proceeds will be held in a scholarship fund to help young athletes achieve their goals.

[www.skileavenworth.com/harald-riise](http://www.skileavenworth.com/harald-riise)

# Tribute Wall

TT

“ *Dear Harald-*

*Thank you for all the memories we have of you, all the fun we had together with you and Share in USA and over here in Norway, it was so fantastic. We will remeber you as a good cousin and best friend ever, Thank you Harald.*

*Laila and Torleif*

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**Torleif Tombre** - December 02, 2021 at 03:22 PM

DK

“ *Take a liking to a Viking!*

*I believe that was written on Odin. I met Harald 32 years ago when I got to go to work for him. Since, I worked for him and with him.*

*There wasn't a thing he could do if he put his mind to it. Harald was an incredible Craftsman. I have ridden bicycles, motorcycles, snowmobiles and skied with Harald. I should say watch him ski. We would take off and he would be gone. I would catch him down the hill talking to someone he knew, seemed like he knew everyone on the hill. Then repeat! In the early 90's Harald was rebuilding the BBW, we were there doing the ground work and the footings when Harald digging around said, "Look!*

*I found a disc". It was a 10 pound vinyl coded weight. I said, "It will be hard to explain to LNI." I put my head down and went back to work and it was about noon time with a sharp shadow and I saw Harald beginning to spin with the 'disc'. On his third revolution, he lost control of the 'disc' and I heard oh- oh and the disc landed on the back of my shoulders and neck. Harald came over and rubbed my neck to make sure I was okay. Harald worked hard and we had fun at work. I will miss his greetings and our talks. We took a liking to the Viking!*

*Our hearts and thoughts go out to the Riise Family.*

*Doug and Peggy Kinnear and family*

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**Doug Kinnear** - November 30, 2021 at 05:59 PM

GK

“ There I was, stuck in the snow. Gary was working out of town and I needed to finish plowing our road and get the kids to school on time. Just then, around the corner came a knight in shining armor (Harald on his tractor). He pulled my truck free and I was on my way. I asked how much he charged and Harald said, "That's what neighbors do.", as he drove off.

Through the years, Harald was always willing to help solve neighborly problems and greet us with a smile and a wave. Gary and I will miss that.

Sincerely, Gary and Katy Kriewald

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**Gary and Katy Kriewald** - November 22, 2021 at 10:02 PM

SA

“ I have such wonderful memories of Harold. I grew up with Kirsten and Nils. I remember his sense of humor the most. He would always tell Kirsten and I stories. I remember when the Riise family first got their orchard and Harold telling Kirsten and I about the hobo that lived close by. I have so many stories and memories. The world is without a incredible man and may he rest in love! And to share and Nils and Kirsten, you are in my prayers and mom and I love you all.

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**Sharon Akau-Baldree** - November 20, 2021 at 04:47 AM