

Rotary Club of Everett



Norma Louise “Lou” Denney

(December 21, 1927 – October 9, 2025)

Norma Louise “Lou” Denney spent nearly a century making room for other people—especially the young.

Lou was born in Yakima, graduated from Yakima High School, and earned her degree in sociology and psychology from Washington State University in 1949. She returned to WSU for a master’s in sociology in 1968, the same year she moved to Everett and took up the work that would define her public life.

That work was Camp Fire. Lou began as District Director for Camp Fire Girls in Oakland, a post she held for three years, then became Executive Director of Camp Fire in Snohomish County. For twenty-one years she led a team of about thirty and kept the county program running: Camp Killoqua, day camp, membership, and the unglamorous business of making the books balance so children could be outdoors. She retired in 1989 after forty years with the organization.

The work outlasted the job. Camp Fire Snohomish County still presents the Lou Denney Award each year to someone whose service has made a difference for youth in Snohomish County. She was also the first recipient of United Way’s Health and Human Services Providers Award. Those honors were not decorations. They named what she had already done.

The Rotary Club of Everett recognized the same thing. The club made Lou an honorary member. The roster carried her name for decades, with the classification “youth work—Camp Fire.” She was not an officer and did not need to be. Rotary’s largest local work is young people. Lou had already spent a career at that table. Honorary membership was the club’s way of saying the work belonged here.

She did not stop when she left the Camp Fire office. She served the Everett Chamber of Commerce, the City of Everett Transportation Advisory Committee, the Edmonds Community College volunteer program, and the Juvenile Justice advisory board. She volunteered at Providence Hospital for twenty-five years. She ushered at Village Theatre, at Driftwood Players in Edmonds, and at community school events. She joined First Presbyterian Church when she arrived in 1968 and remained a member for the rest of her life.

Camp Fire’s word is WoHeLo—work, health, love. Lou lived inside that word. This club is poorer for her absence and richer for the years her name stood on the roster. We remember Lou Denney with gratitude.