

Rotary Club of Everett



DICK HANSON

EVERETT ROTARY TRIBUTE - JUNE 26, 2018

Thank you, President Will. As I begin, I want you to note my Blue and Gold attire for the day – the colors of Rotary and Everett High School.

Former Everett Rotary President Richard Arthur “Dick” Hanson passed away on April 12, 2018 at the age of 83. He is survived by his wife Helen; his brother Larry; his six children: John (Amy), Heidi (Brian), Maureen (Dan), Rich (Kari), Ann, and Mary Ann (Sean) and fifteen grandchildren: Peter, Taylor, Tom, Scott, Max, Rosemary, Maia, Ian, Will, Emmett, Sophia, William, John, Seamus, and Greta.

Born on February 17, 1935 as the fifth of Anna and Willard Hanson's six children, Dick grew up in a small house at the east end of a rough seldom traveled gravel road that today is the busy suburban drive 100th Street SE. For much of Dick's childhood, the modest home had no indoor plumbing. Dick attended Silver Lake Grade School, in those days a country school that served the largely rural area between Everett and Bothell. He came into the big city of Everett to attend South Junior High School and then Everett High School. Dick excelled in athletics at all three schools and always credited sports for teaching him some of life's most important lessons.

Football was the king of sports at Everett High and Dick became the varsity quarterback. In his senior year, he was the football co-captain with his friend Jim Linden. Interestingly, both boys had overcome childhood rheumatic fever to achieve success as athletes and leaders. Dick also captained the basketball team and was involved in a variety of other activities that earned him the Everett Exchange Club Boy of the Year Award in 1955, the year of his high school graduation.

But, of all of Dick's high school experiences, the most significant was the romance that blossomed between him and a perky Everett High girl Helen Flynn. They would wed in 1958 and if ever a marriage was made in heaven, this was it.

After high school, Dick attended Everett Junior College, graduated from the University of Washington, and began an outstanding career with the Everett School District. He was first

a teacher and coach at Cascade High School. After earning his Master's degree at Seattle University, he became a vice principal at Evergreen Middle School and Cascade . He then returned to Everett High to be the first alumnus of the school to serve as principal. Among his many EHS accomplishments, Dick coerced Bernie Webber into the PTA presidency with the admonition that anyone who sent 10 kids to Everett High had to be the PTA president. Dick eventually left Everett High to work in the district office. When he retired in 1994, he was the district's assistant superintendent for instruction.

During this period, Dick emerged as a pillar of the community. He was respected by everyone for his integrity, his strong work ethic, his respectful attitude toward others and his impeccable sense of fairness. Devoted to his faith, he was a committed and active member of Mukilteo's St. John Catholic Church. He joined the Everett Rotary Club in 1974 and was president during the 1993-94 year. My search of the Rotary archives leads me to believe that Dick and Larry Hanson are the only set of brothers to ever serve as presidents of this Club. With little experience in construction, he enlisted the help of family and friends and completed from scratch his family dream home in 1968. His next door neighbor at the new house was banker Tom Rainville. And, always the competitor, Dick found time for golf and became a member of a bridge club that was developed by a group of Everett Rotarians, including Mr. Rainville.

Above all, Dick Hanson was the consummate family man. The bond between he and Helen blended the two into one. Together they raised six children in an atmosphere of love, faith and involvement. When grandchildren came along, that same devotion was shared with another generation of kids. By this time, Dick was retired from the school district, which gave him more time to be a special Grandpa to those 15 grandchildren. He loved helping people, especially those wiggly little kids.

In speaking of Dick, allow me a moment of personal privilege. I first met him 70 years ago this spring when our Jefferson School fifth grade softball team ventured out to challenge the Silver Lake nine. Dick was the Silver Lake pitcher and he mowed us down with ease. He was good, but even at that young age, I noted that he did not gloat over that victory. He was too classy to put down others and that was the Dick Hanson I saw the rest of his life. We went to South Junior together and graduated from Everett High School in 1955. At that time, I had no idea I would have the good fortune to work with him for much of my career in the Everett School District. He was the perfect colleague and friend – honest, dedicated, measured in his approach to issues, and always looking for solutions that made the best sense for kids. He was practicing the Rotary 4 Way Test long before I knew what it was.

He was also a good sport with a crackling sense of humor. I remember when Dick and I were among several high school counselors who took the General Aptitude Test Battery as a way to learn what it was all about. One phase of the battery was a timed test on manual

dexterity where each of us would transfer small washers from one spindle to another as fast as we could. Dick was nursing a broken finger but that didn't deter his competitive zeal. The timer shouted "Start" and we each jumped to action at our station. Most of us dropped an occasional washer; Dick was the exception. His little washers went everywhere except from spindle to spindle. They bounced off the table and skittered across the floor. Dick lunged under the table, crawled around furiously and popped up occasionally in a futile effort to corral the washers. More escaped his grip and his actions deteriorated to a random flailing of limbs and an increased reddening of his face. The rest of us tried to concentrate on the task but it was hard to not be distracted by Dick's antics. When the timer finally shouted "Stop", we immediately burst into laughter and nobody guffawed any louder or longer than Dick Hanson. He was fun.

There is so much more I could say about this wonderful guy but as I wrap this up, I want to thank you, Helen, and the rest of the family for sharing Dick with all of us. We are richer because he was part of our lives.

I mentioned that Dick was the consummate family man and I will close by reciting a list that appeared at the end of his obituary.

He was

the giver of hugs,
the cuddler of babies,
the whistler of tunes,
the reader of stories,
the maker of heirlooms,
the watcher of performances,
the cheerer of athletes,
the player of games,
the doer of good deeds.

But above all else,
the father we love.

Now I would ask that we stand and observe a moment of silence in memory of our departed friend Dick Hanson.

(Ring the bell)

Helen, I am going to ask our President Will McMahan to present you the written text of today's tribute to Dick and a recent history of this Club with an inscription that reads, "This booklet is given to the family of Dick Hanson in memory of his outstanding service

as an Everett Rotarian“.

This concludes our tribute.

Lawrence E. O'Donnell, Everett Rotary Club Resolutions Committee Chair