



REMEMBERING
David Willard Melenka (Moke)

February 13, 1936 - February 13, 2023



It is with heavy hearts that we share the peaceful passing of David "Moke" Melenka on Monday, February 13th - his 87th birthday.

He was born in Trail and at the age of 15, ventured into the forest with his first crew Timber Cruising. He spent his entire life in the woods - eventually retiring from Crestbrook Forest Industries in Cranbrook in 1996. There is not a hillside in the East or West Kootenay he has not walked and the stories of his adventures in these mountains are legendary.

A first date with a mustang-driving new teacher in town turned into a life-long partnership and Moke was incredibly proud of Kathleen and the life they built together.

While forestry was his career, his connection to the land and wildlife were an integral part of who he was. He took great pride in teaching his children (and many others) to hunt and fish, as he shared his passion for the outdoors. That connection to the land and the outdoors lives on through his son, who now walks the hills and is creating a new legacy. When he and Kathleen built their home on 5 acres just outside of Cranbrook, he loved spending time in the garden and could often be found sitting on the bank overlooking the lake, perfectly at peace.

A storyteller at heart, he could entertain a crowd with his dancing eyes and big smile. From telling bedtime stories, to campfire tales, MC'ing weddings and presenting to forestry classes at UBC, his gift for storytelling made an impact. That legacy lives on through his daughter. He was known for his strength, his integrity, and his tireless work ethic. His smile filled the room and he loved having friends and family together - whether it was around the fire for a corn roast, or on a mountain top during elk season.

Moke leaves behind his wife of 53 years, Kathleen; their children Loree (Paul), son

Jim, grandchildren Ryder, Dagen, Jessi and Jake; his brother Ed (Denise); and, Shawn Melenka (Bob). He was predeceased by his parents, and siblings Sadie and Roy.

The family would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Phyllis and John of Comfort Care Home for taking such good care of him over this last year and a half; Brian Clifford for taking him out on so many adventures and making the past year so rich; and, to all of his friends for their compassion and support.

In the 1990s Moke and a number of other local wildlife enthusiasts met with, and convinced, the provincial government to establish a surtax on hunting and fishing licences to support wildlife conservation in BC. Today, it is known as the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation and has given over \$200 million in grants to wildlife conservation projects. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation.

He touched so many people throughout his life and his family would love to gather stories and memories. Please share your recollections and stories by email at mokemelenka@gmail.com

You would often see a distant look in his eye and as a smile crawled across this face, he'd say "I've lived a beautiful life." And that he did. He will be deeply missed.

An open house to celebrate his life will be held Saturday, May 27, 2023 from 2pm-4:30pm at their home.

,

His memory will be eternal

