

Eugene "Gene" Brown | 1940 - 2011 | Obituary



Eugene "Gene" Brown

September 4, 1940 - March 12, 2011

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Colorful local character, writer, cartoonist, and photographer, Eugene R. Brown, went to be with his savior Jesus Christ on Saturday, March 12, 2011. Gene had fought a long and quiet battle with cancer for several years.

A memorial service will be held, to remember Gene, at Coffelt's Funeral Chapel on Thursday, March 24th, at 10:00 a.m. Pastor Dennis Crystal, Troy, Montana, will be officiating.

Gene was born on Sept. 4, 1940 in San Bernardino, California. Gene had the good fortune of being present to witness many of the cultural events and icons that defined postwar America.

Although Gene did not possess the mechanical ability to thread a nut on a bolt, he was heavily involved in the postwar California car culture. Gene's father was a respected professional mechanic and early speed and racing enthusiast. Gene grew up around hot rod legends such as Dick Kraft and Stanley Betts. Gene's youth was filled with memories of dry lake racing, speed trials, and dirt track racing.

Gene joined the Army but his enlistment was cut short after being involved in a horrific motorcycle accident. In 1962, after multiple surgeries and still wearing a cast, Gene and a friend left home to see "all of America" in his friends restored 1934 Packard. While in Spokane, his friend insisted on visiting a town called Sandpoint, which Gene did not want to see. Gene fell in love with Bonner County and its residents that day. Gene vowed to move to Bonner County as soon as possible, but his career would delay him seventeen years.

Gene next became part of the surf and music scene in southern California, writing and drawing surf cartoons and books, and even producing a movie which he showed nationwide. HODADS BEWARE was the first in several 1960's surf cartoon publications Gene would create. Gene also befriended many of the surf and music crowd such as Dick Dale and early members of the Beach Boys.

Gene next took a job as a cub reporter and photographer at a local conservative Anaheim newspaper. Luck and inexperience allowed Gene, and an attractive brunette he had recently met named Carla, to witness and photograph the start of the Watts Riots. Gene and Carla dodged sniper fire, building fires and rioters and were able to escape with photos which were published nationally. His work, as a reporter, would put him in contact with politicians, crime bosses and law enforcement for many years.

Several years after Gene married Carla, the couple moved to Sandpoint in 1979. Gene attended screen writers school and put his writing career in high gear. Gene published many articles about his friend Elmer Keith in various magazines, and had a movie script about Elmer under submission at the time of his death. Gene was also a regular contributor to "Precision Shooting Magazine" writing about the people involved in the shooting business. Gene was a staunch conservative, and supporter of the constitution. Gene and Carla ran "Brown's Books" for many years. Gene also served a term as Bonner County Commissioner.

Gene lost the home he built and the love of his life, Carla, all in one week in 2007. Gene took comfort in his recent trials by faith.

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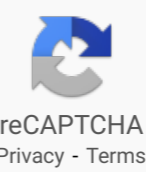
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