

## Jerry Robert Matthews



Jerry Robert Matthews, born in 1937, Longview, Washington, was the child of a generation shaped by how World War II separated families. Jerry's father served at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, while his mother ran a fuel oil business in Washington. When the family rejoined after the war, they moved to Wenatchee, Washington. Jerry's parents encouraged honesty, bravery, fairness to all, loyalty, and optimism. These values served Jerry well as a youth during his full school schedule, activities as a boy scout, eagle scout and his winter birthday favorite, downhill coasting with

friends. The same family values motivated Jerry's unflinching acceptance of challenges in later life. After high school he competed in cross country skiing and ski jumping at Wenatchee Community College then moved to Seattle for studies and fun at the University of Washington where he joined the ATO fraternity, lettered in skiing, and competed as coxswain on the UW crew team. After graduating he earned a commission in the Washington Army National Guard and made a commitment to National Guard military service that he honored through moves first to California, then Oregon where he retired 30 years later as Lt. Colonel. CAREER: With a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Washington Jerry moved to Bellevue and started his career at Boeing, Seattle. There he met his wife, learned to fly and developed an interest in sports car racing. He moved his family to a five-acre farm with five head of black angus cattle and a big shop in Edgewood. From there he and a crew of enthusiastic friends and family campaigned a series of sports racing cars regularly on west coast tracks with the Sports Car Club of America until five years and two daughters later when the Boeing SST (Supersonic Transport) airplane was cancelled. That Seattle event left thousands of technical professionals, including Jerry, seeking new employment and drastically changing lifestyles. Fortunately, the punch-card-computer-aided engineering skills Jerry learned at Boeing propelled him across the employment obstacles to an engineering position at Hewlett Packard in Palo Alto, California in 1972. With a recent private pilot's license in his pocket, an antique Fordson Tractor in tow, and a dozen cherished rhododendrons packed in the back of the commercial moving truck, the family headed south on I-5. On that trip Jerry crossed the threshold of an exploding digital world that started with Hewlett Packard's hand held calculator, the HP-35. As a Hewlett Packard engineer Jerry qualified for advanced education at Stanford University. He eagerly took the opportunity to earn a M.S in Manufacturing Engineering Management. While living in Saratoga, the Matthews family found new activities related to Jerry's interests. Way before cell phone cameras existed, they captured California coastal landscapes with hand held video and single reflex still cameras, then further explored California's San Andreas split landscape through an airplane partnership with another HP pilot. The family enjoyed the excitement of parades and events where Jerry played and marched in the Royal Canadian Legion Bagpipe Band along with his mentor piper who also worked at HP. Hewlett Packard expanded to become a truly international corporation in the 1970's. Journalists began using the term

"Silicon Valley" to describe proliferating electronics firms in the Santa Clara Valley with Palo Alto and HP at its center. HP's worldwide expansion shaped another threshold for Jerry to cross and he took it! The family moved to Philomath Oregon, near the new Corvallis Hewlett Packard site and the home of Oregon State University. Daughters went to public schools in Philomath then to Oregon State University where one graduated in Business, the other in Science. Jerry's wife joined the start-up of the OSU web-based Distance Education program. While living in Philomath, Jerry served on the City Council, Planning Commission and Board of the Volunteer Fire Department. While in the latter office the family's old growth cedar shake roof caught fire and burned their 4600 square foot home to the framing. What wasn't destroyed by flames was by water. Rather than move to an apartment during more than a year of reconstruction, the couple moved into an Airstream trailer parked in their driveway. While at HP Corvallis, Jerry sourced European and Asian suppliers for the company. Travelling for business prompted his cultivation of existing photographic skills and his interest in other cultures. His photographs advanced from work-related 35mm "record shots" to competitive digital from places he visited around the world. BOATING: A Philomath friend and neighbor encouraged Jerry to try his effort at sailing. He did! It didn't take long for him to expand that effort to racing his own sail boat with friends and daughter as faithful crew in successful competitive club events. They raced two successive boats named COSMOS, winning class and overall trophies on the Columbia River and Puget Sound until shortly before his "first retirement" from Hewlett Packard in 1999. A love for boating, photography and an employment offer from a Bainbridge Island start-up company, Medius/Airbiquity, lured Jerry and his wife north across the original I-5 Bridge at Portland, to live on Bainbridge Island, a short ferry ride from Seattle. They continued boating, but at a slower pace first in a 1940 Monk-designed Tacoma Boat, "Storm King" and later a 1942 Monk, "Pat Foss". Jerry, his family and friends explored waters of Puget Sound. He skippered his boats across the US/Canadian Border, north along Vancouver Island and past the Gulf Islands, where his trophies were captures of nature on digital camera cards. Jerry joined other non-racing boat adventurers with the Classic Yacht Association, SeaStars an association of officers of the Grand 14 Yacht Clubs of Puget Sound which included his home moorage, the Port Orchard Yacht Club where he was commodore in 2005.

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