

Don, of Anacortes, Wash., passed away Jan. 27, 2009, after a courageous two-year battle against prostate cancer. He was born Oct. 14, 1935, in Philadelphia to Alexander Metcalf Fisher II and Catherine Boyd Fisher. His family relocated from the Northeast to Seattle when Don was a teenager. He completed high school at Highline and was a graduate of the University of Washington in botany. Following two years in the Navy, he received a master's degree from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and a Ph.D. from Iowa State University. It was at Iowa State that Don met Rita, his wife of 45 years.

After a brief stay in the Bay Area of California, they moved to Athens, Ga., where Don began his career at the University of Georgia as a university teacher and researcher in the field of plant physiology. Ten years later, they moved to Pullman, where he retired in 1999 from Washington State University.

They enjoyed a year of travel in their RV before resettling in Anacortes. Don greatly enjoyed hiking the many trails throughout that area, including the North Cascades, as well as in Anacortes and on Whidbey Island. He particularly liked to share those hikes with friends who also recognized what a privilege it was to have such opportunities. When hiking wasn't an option, he was usually found with a book in his lap, trying to make up for time lost while following his career.

Don is survived by his wife, two children and three grandchildren. Daughter Jennifer Smithers lives in Woodinville, Wash., with her children, Matthew and Abby, and her life partner, Brandon Brown. Son Gregory, his wife Shannon and daughter Mackensie live in University Place, Wash. He also is survived by three sisters, Susan Nelson (Len) of Seattle, Carol of Palo Alto, Calif., and Margie Howard (Bob) of Fairbanks, Alaska; and six nieces and one nephew, plus sister-in-law Dorothy Hinz (Dennis) of Salisbury, N.C., and one niece. He was preceded in death by his parents, his brother, Alex, and his parents-in-law.

A celebration of Don's life will be held on a date to be announced. Memorials may be made to the Nature Conservancy of Washington, Skagit Habitat for Humanity, Washington State University General Scholarship Fund or a charity of choice.

(From the Moscow-Pullman (Washington) Daily News.)