

1958 - (father of) Terry '58 SEMANKO, and Claudia '62 SEMANKO

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Roger William Semanko, 92

Posted: Tuesday, November 23, 2010 3:34 pm | Updated: 10:41 am, Fri Dec 10, 2010. _

A heart of gold stopped beating today as our beloved Roger W. Semanko, of Coeur d'Alene, peacefully passed away Saturday, Nov. 20, 2010, after suffering a broken hip and a bout with pneumonia.

Roger was born on Jan. 22, 1918, on the family homestead in Prairie Elk, Mont. His parents were Peter Lawrence Semanko and Mary Elizabeth Zettler. He was the third of 15 children.

Roger was an inventor at a very early age, making several pairs of stilts and also made his first pair of skis out of barrel stays, using his "Pa's" old leather harness straps to hold them on his feet. He later became an avid skier. Roger was a very good athlete and played the tuba in the high school band. He was an entrepreneur at an early age, trapping skunk and others critters selling the hides to make money during the Depression. In the early days he worked in the onion and potato fields in Hollandale, Minn., during summer vacation from school. Roger started playing the fiddle when he was 6 and by the time he was 8 he was playing the fiddle in his brothers band. From that time on he was known all over the country for his fiddle playing and still was up until his passing.

He married Myra Knowlton at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Stanley, Wis., on June 14, 1939. Roger hitchhiked 300 miles home to Wisconsin to get married. They went back to Hollandale and began their life together. As a young man, Roger studied by kerosine lamp in the barn (it was too noisy in the house) to learn how to become a welder through a correspondence course he was taking. He always did what it took to provide a better life for his young family. He was in the top five best welders in the country. He began working at A.O. Smith Mfg. welding the propellers and landing gears on the B17 and the B29 Bombers. He was deferred five times from the war because he was more valuable to the war effort with the specialty job he was performing.

After the war he worked for US Royal Tire Company in Eau Claire, Wis., before going to Albuquerque, N.M., in 1952 where he became a finish carpenter. They moved to Coeur d'Alene in 1954. Roger worked for Kaiser Aluminum and was a member of Carpenter's Local. They first lived on the Rimrock on the old Harmon place while they were building their new home in Nettleton Gulch. In 1988 they moved to Coeur d'Alene due to medical reasons. Roger was an avid hunter and fisherman.

He is preceded in death by his wife of 63 years, Myra; several brothers; sisters; nieces and nephews.

He is survived by a son and five daughters, Terrill Semanko (Ruth) of Coeur d'Alene, Karilyn Nice (Russell) of Twin Falls, Claudia Normand (John) of Chippewa Falls, Wis., Marleen Knizley (Larry) of Grand Junction, Colo., Rosala Peak (Steve) of Coeur d'Alene, Maria Reed (Ron) of Reno, Nev.; several grandchildren; great-grandchildren; great-great-grandchildren; one brother Gene Semanko (Carla); sisters Norma blessing of Rice Lake, Wis., Clara LaFaive of Chippewa Falls, Wis.; numerous nieces, nephews and beloved friends.

The family wishes to thank Roger's other family Beehive Homes where he was a resident for seven years. We could not have offered him better care; food or more love than he received at Beehive. God will bless each of them abundantly.

Viewing will be held from 3-7 p.m. Friday, Nov. 26, 2010, followed by the Rosary at English Funeral Chapel in Coeur d'Alene. A funeral Mass will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 27, 2010, at St. Pius Catholic Church in Coeur d'Alene, with burial at Riverview Cemetery on Government Way, followed by a reception at St. Pius in the hospitality room.

Please sign Roger's guest registry and view his online memorial at www.englishfuneralchapel.com.