

## ***Rusty Dean Aldrich*** November 16, 1973-August 7, 2024

Rusty Dean Aldrich made his journey to heaven on August 7 th , 2024, surrounded by the love of his life and six of the seven children. His Memorial Service was held on Saturday August 17th 10 AM at Gray's West & Co-Pioneer Chapel with a procession that followed Rusty to Rock Creek Cemetery in Haines, Oregon for his final resting place.

“Work hard for everything that you receive so you can be proud of who you are, what you have, and where you come from. Remember to always try to see the big picture and work from your obituary backwards so you know who your children and grandchildren will be remembering.” This was his motto. He made it a point to fill each and every moment with purpose and passion. From the longest days at work to the shortest moments with family, he never let a moment pass without giving it his full heart and commitment.

Born on November 16, 1973, in Baker City, Oregon, Rusty started his journey in Rock Creek. With the help of his brother and their cousins, he created memories of mischief and wonder as the joy of growing up was equaled only by the chaos he loved to sow as they romped around Rock Creek. As he continued to grow, Rusty found a passion for sports that was undeniable. He played baseball with the level of commitment and confidence that he showed every day, knowing that giving your all is something more than just words. Through his high school years, he continued to raise mayhem with Scott Harris and Jerry Dowdy. As they partied and made choices that many teenage boys do, Rusty naturally found himself expecting his beautiful baby girl Ashley. As her eyes opened for the first time, so did his heart. Rusty's love for his daughter ignited the spark that set off one of the most profound chain reactions. Understanding the responsibility that all parents have for their children, Rusty made the hard choice to get his GED early so he could start providing for his family.

“A second-generation carpenter, proud to be following in my father's footsteps.”

His admiration for his dad and his newfound love for his daughter steered him into the construction industry. Starting as a laborer alongside his father, Rusty built a successful and fulfilling career. His dedication was further solidified when he joined the Carpenter's Union and started working at Dale Ramsey Construction. With each passing year, Rusty's career flourished, and so did his family. He married his first wife, and along came his son Michael. While the marriage didn't last, Rusty always found joy in sharing a beer with his dad after a long day of work, knowing he was on a meaningful path.

As the jobs grew bigger and work got harder, he found his two best friends, Scott and Jerry, always had his back. Like wine gets better with age, so did their friendship. As memories were made and the future became the present, in walked Kelly. He didn't know at the time that their meeting on the porch was about to bring a hurricane of life and love. As the texts came faster and calls got longer, both Kelly and Rusty knew that it was simply meant to be. In the blink of an eye, Rusty gained four new children: three sons, Zachary, Justin, and Jayden, and one daughter, Kaitlyn. Each personality added a shining light to the family. In 2008, Kelly and Rusty sealed their love with a lifelong commitment, getting married in a helicopter over the Las Vegas Strip. The two of them together illuminated by the bright lights is a perfect way to describe how their marriage would continue. The lights that continued to shine around them came in many forms. The brightest of those lights

was the Snake River and the family. With a cold Coors Light in hand and family in tow, fishing, boating, hunting, and building became a way of life for the Aldrich family.

They approached each with boundless enthusiasm. Rusty was always captivated by the sky. His passion led him from paragliding to learning to fly a plane, all to share the joy of flight with his wife once more and reaffirm the commitment he made to her. The commitment he made to God was one he also took very seriously and in true Aldrich style was baptized in a horse trough at the Cowboy Church in Casa Grande,

Arizona.

Among his many accomplishments, Rusty became a Freemason and was honored to become a Knight Templar. For over 30 years, he was a cornerstone in the growth and evolution of Dale Ramsey Construction, which eventually evolved into Gerding Builders. Tom Gerding was more than a mentor and boss; he was like family to Rusty. Amidst all the changes, one thing remained steadfast: Rusty's unwavering dedication. As the company transformed, Rusty not only gained professional stability and lifelong friendships but also relished the satisfaction of a hard day's work, achieved through his tireless devotion. His commitment was evident in his regular weekly travels to Western Oregon, enduring a grueling seven-hour journey one way to collaborate with Dennis and Dave. Rusty took pride in his work on notable projects such as the Pendleton Water Park, Crater Lake, the Baker City Armory, Caliche, The Lodge, and concluded with West Albany High School. Each project stands as a testament to his unparalleled work ethic and dedication, reflecting a career built on passion and perseverance.

As stars shine bright in the night sky, the newest and brightest star to the Aldrich family is his beautiful daughter Raylynn. While there are many coincidences in life, the addition of Raylynn can only be described as divine intervention. The love they share as daddy and daughter will be something she will always hold on to, providing the strength to become who she was always meant to be. Every morning after giving Rusty a hug as she was leaving for school, she always turned back with a sly grin saying, “Goodbye, Farty-Pants,” leaving Rusty with a little laugh and proud smile knowing that is the best way to start the day.

In every aspect of life, Rusty gave his all, creating countless memories through his hard work and infectious spirit. We find solace knowing Rusty is reuniting with family in a place of eternal peace with a cold Coors Light next to his dad.

Rusty's legacy continues through his devoted wife, Kelly Aldrich; his children, Zachary Robinson, Justin (Amanda) Robinson, Ashley (Scott) Halsey, Michael (Taylor) Aldrich, Jayden (Maisie) Uttenreuther, Kaitlyn (Jake) Zink, and Raylynn Aldrich; his loving mother, Nickie Wiskoff; and his siblings, Randy Aldrich and Tina Bennett. He also leaves behind nine grandchildren and one great-grandson, all of whom brought immeasurable joy and love to his life.

Rusty joins his father, Navarro Neil Aldrich; his grandparents, Mona and Dutch Aldrich, Earl English and Doris Evans; his uncle, Robert Aldrich; and his father-in-law, Antone Marty.

Memorial contributions can be made to Blue Mountain Masonic Lodge #34 in Baker City or ALS Research Foundation through Gray's West & Co. Pioneer Chapel at 1500 Dewey Ave., Baker City, OR 97814. To leave an online condolence for the family of Rusty, please visit [www.grayswestco.com](http://www.grayswestco.com).

