

David Ray Best, Sr.

July 8, 1959 - December 1, 2023

In the early hours of Friday morning, Dec. 1, 2023, at the U of W Hospital, Seattle, WA, Dave Best Sr. passed away with his beloved family by his side.

Dave was born July 8, 1959, to his parents James Best Sr. and Alice Best (Condon), in Omak, Wash., and was raised in the beautiful valley of Kartar, near Omak, where he was coming and going all through his life. Sometimes you could hear him say, "See you in the fall if I see you at all". Dave along with his sister and four brothers helped their parents with farming the land, being ranchers, bucking bales, and tending to their horses and cattle. Kartar was home a place where you become tough and learn the true meaning of a real cowboy.

Dave was a man of many talents, in his younger days he would salmon fish at the Chief Joseph Dam, and loved riding and hunting on Boot Mountain and Whitmore Mountain, heck he had the game reserve in his backyard. That must have been where all those big bucks traveled from. He held various jobs, was a handyman, skilled in construction work and mechanics, he could run a chainsaw/wood cutting, horse training, farrier (horse shoeing) and he was always willing to help young people who were interested in learning about horses and rodeo. He even braided ropes for some of the young and upcoming cowboys.

In the spring he loved to ride horses for fun, he would break and train the horses, making some darn good saddle horses that you could trust, trust enough to put your gal on or even a little one; and while on his rides, if he could he would grab a handful of budding sunflower stems to eat, he'd even bring some home to share with his mom and grandma Margret. What a great way to spend the day sitting high atop a horse overlooking Kartar Valley living his best life.

Chasing, catching, and breaking wild horses was a great pastime. Some of the best saddle horses around were broke and tamed by him. He learned how to master the art of riding bucking broncs and the skill of becoming a farrier from a man he idolized and called a hero, another legend, the late Oliver Louis. Dave would say Oliver was magic, he could spur a bronc like no other, style and class, right down the middle. He said even his dismounts were legendary.

Dave attended school at St. Mary's Mission later known as PSIS and Omak High School where he found a new love called "Wrestling". He was a top competitor and won many titles during his high school years. He played some basketball with the Desautel Eagles too, traveling to a few tournaments keeping busy on the off season. Back then the off season was during winter months when the rodeo events were not happening.

Rodeo season, especially Cowboy Christmas, was Dave's favorite time of year. He won his first big win in 1974, Steer Riding at the young age of 14 at the Chemawa Indian School Rodeo, Salem, Ore. He was hooked, this new found love took him thousands and thousands of miles across the country, mostly by land but sometimes by air. He would say "man people in the airport must not have ever seen a cowboy packing a gear bag and bronc saddle before".

As a Bareback, Saddle Bronc and Bull Rider, he won many championship titles, and many times he would enter timed events like Team Roping and Cow Milking allowing him a chance to win multiple All-Around Cowboy honors. He was a member of PRCA Columbia River Circuit (CRC) winning 1st place in Saddle Bronc and Bull Riding events and was named 1983 CRC Bull Rider of the year and honored at the CRC annual banquet held in Boardman, Ore. Dave rode at numerous PRCA Rodeos, just to name a few places, the Cow Palace in San Francisco where he won the 1983 Bull Riding Championship; winning and or placing at Joseph, St Paul, Eugene, Sisters, Portland, Pendleton, Prineville, Redmond, Roseburg, Toppenish, Spokane, Omak, Moses Lake, Newport, Yakima , Coulee City, Boise, Coeur d'Alene, Lewiston, Thompson Falls, Missoula, Sacramento, Red Bluff, Redding, Calgary, Ashcroft, Kamloops, Vancouver, and Kelowna, you name it - he was probably there.

He was also a member of the Western States Indian Rodeo Association (WSIRA). He traveled to hundreds of Indian Rodeos across the United States, British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan this was another place where he shined, sometimes he shined so bright you had to wear sunglasses just to hang out with him. Dave loved the White Swan Treaty Days Rodeo Celebration, Warm Springs Pi-ume-sha Treaty Days, Tygh Valley, Hoopa Valley, Nespelem, Merritt, Chopaka, Merritt, Armstrong, Williams Lake, Hobbema rodeos just to name a few. Dave received, by invitation only, invites to Casper Baca Bull Riding Extravaganza, Farmington, N.M., and the Mashantucket Pequot-Schemitzun Rodeo, Mashantucket, Conn., to compete against top riders across the country.

Dave exuded with charisma, confidence, and a whole lot a try, he was a humble man, never having to boaster or brag about himself, as his bull riding hero and legendary Uncle Larry Condon would say “no need to brag boys, I

was there, I know what happened”.

Dave’s Indian National Finals Rodeo (INFR) championship titles included, 1979 Saddle Bronc (Salt Palace, Salt Lake City, UT) and 1979 Saddle Bronc, 1988 and 1991 Bull Riding (NM State Fairgrounds, Albuquerque, NM). He was inducted to the INFR Hall of Fame in 2015, and he will always be remembered for his graceful moves on the arena floor that day as they announced his name he displayed his smooth moves across the arena floor while shaking the hands of the other inductees being honored that day as well.

Dave loved the smell of a rodeo, pulling in to the rodeo grounds he would roll down his window, take a deep breath and say “you smell that boys”. Oh you mean the rotten smell of manure. He would say “no that’s the best smell around boys, it’s the smell of money, money in my pocket”. There were times, when Dave would be shaking hands of all the cowboys warming up behind the chutes getting ready for their ride, and they’d say why Dave why you shaking my hand, I didn’t even ride yet. Dave would turn and say “I’m just thanking you for your donations, thank you very much, much appreciated”.

Dave is survived by his sister, Veronica “Roni” Louis-Marcellay (Randy), and his three brothers, James “Jim” Best Jr. (Cecelia), Thomas “Tom” Best (Sarah) and Shawn Best Sr.; his children David Best II (Melissa), Alana Benson (Zack), Jess Shadle and Vincent Lezard; and his grandchildren, Brandon, Cameron, Duane “Dewy”, Little Dave III, Stella and Neveah, and many nieces, nephews, and many relatives, and close friends who were like family.

He was preceded in death by his parents James Sr. and Alice Best, and brothers Larry Dean and DuWayne Xavier Best Sr.; and many ancestors who will be welcoming him into their arms.

Dave was an enrolled member of the Colville Tribes' of the Wenatchi, Methow, Moses/Columbia, Chelan, Entiat, and Okanogan Tribes, and was baptized at St. Mary's Mission Catholic Church.

His services and burial arrangements are as follows: a traditional dressing at 3 p.m. at the River Valley Funeral Home in Okanogan, WA, on Wednesday, Dec. 6, 2023; and a Family Wake at the Omak Longhouse on Wednesday, Dec. 6, 2023, at 7 p.m.; Public Rosary will be at the Omak Longhouse on Thursday, Dec. 7, 2023, at 7 p.m.; Services will be at the Omak Longhouse on Friday, Dec. 8, 2023, at 10 a.m. He will be laid to rest next to his parents in the Kartar Valley Cemetery. A dinner will be shared with family and friends of Dave at the Omak Longhouse following the burial.

Flowers may be sent to Omak Longhouse, 7 Mission Rd., Omak, WA 98841, (509) 422-7400, beginning Dec. 6, 2023.

Previous Events

Native Traditions

DEC 6. 3:00 PM - 3:30 PM (PT)

River Valley Funeral
2547 ELMWAY
OKANOGAN, 98840-9629

Rosary

DEC 6. 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM (PT)

Omak Long House
25 Mission Road
Omak, WA 98841

Rosary

DEC 7. 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM (PT)

Omak Long House
25 Mission Road
Omak, WA 98841

Funeral Mass

DEC 8. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (PT)

Omak Long House
25 Mission Road
Omak, WA 98841

Graveside Service

DEC 8. 12:00 PM - 12:30 PM.

KarTar Cemetery

Tribute Wall



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of David Ray Best, Sr..*



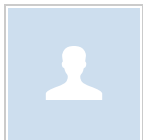
December 08, 2023 at 03:08 AM



“ *My memories of Dave are all great. His pleasant nature gave him a particular charm. His competitive ability gave him skills to win often. I will forever be thankful having Dave as a friend whom I have had the pleasure of knowing. Dave is missed.*



Larry Best - December 06, 2023 at 10:16 AM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of David Ray Best, Sr..*



December 05, 2023 at 11:29 PM



“ *Raf and Buffy DeGuevara and girls planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of David Ray Best, Sr..*

Raf and Buffy DeGuevara and girls - December 05, 2023 at 11:29 PM

SF

“ Shannon Family purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of David Ray Best, Sr..



Shannon Family - December 05, 2023 at 10:06 PM

RF

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



River Valley Funeral - December 05, 2023 at 05:37 PM