



Velton Ray Oden

January 31, 1932 - July 2, 2021

Velton Ray Oden passed away on July 2nd at Peace Health Southwest Hospital. He was 89 years old.

Velton was born on January 31st, 1932 in Floydada, Texas to Alvin and Nettie Oden. He spent his childhood building his own toys and playing with his brother Weldon. He graduated from Grand Junction High School in Colorado in 1950.

At the age of 19, he enlisted himself in the United States Marine Corps and served from February 27th, 1951, to February 26th, 1954. He entered the Marines as a private, became a corporal in December 1951, and was promoted to sergeant in March 1952. Velton was an expert rifleman and was stationed in South Korea just north of Seoul. He often spoke about the lack of proper cuisine in the USMC, especially the powdered eggs and potatoes. When asked how they tasted, he remarked that they "were as tasty as sawdust." He was often assigned to supply train guard duty, bunking in an empty boxcar with three other men. After the armistice was signed, he played a pivotal role in withdrawing his Marine company from Cho Do Island off the coast of North Korea. He had 48 hours to retrieve his men safely.

Velton was honorably discharged from the Marines and began work as a moving van driver until he met his beautiful wife, Joyce, in 1959. They were

married September 3rd, 1961 and moved to Fort Morgan, Colorado, where he worked for the Mountain Bell Telephone Company. On April 21st, 1965, Velton and Joyce welcomed their son, Daryn, into their family. Two years later, they moved to Beaverton, Oregon, where they had their daughter, Dawn, on November 2nd, 1967.

He loved his children and made every effort to make their childhood memorable. Utilizing his handyman skills, he crafted a giant tire swing for Daryn and Dawn in the backyard. He built Daryn a treehouse that occupied four trees instead of just one. Each of the structure's four corners was anchored to a separate tree, giving the treehouse about 625 square feet of ground space. When it came time to install a ladder, Velton wasn't interested in building your run-of-the-mill rope ladder; his ladder was retractable and allowed Daryn and his friends to crank it up once they reached the treehouse's top. This gave the occupants complete privacy and was deemed the "coolest" feature amongst Daryn's friends. When Dawn was eight, Velton built her a pink playhouse in the shape of a barn. Outside the barn's tiny doors was a miniature porch. Inside, the little playhouse had electricity and soon became a favorite spot for sleepovers.

Velton worked tirelessly to support his family and tried his hand at owning his own electronic business called Com-Sci. Unfortunately, he could never get it off the ground, but this only fueled his determination to find something better. In 1975, America was in the midst of a great oil shortage. Catching wind of the massive Alaskan Pipeline project that was underway, Velton headed north to find work on the project, spending many long months away from home working on the pipeline's machinery. To stay in touch with his family, he sent tape-recordings of his voice through the mail. Joyce, Daryn, and Dawn sent their recordings back.

In 1979, Velton and his family moved to Battle Ground, Washington. From

1979 to 1986, Velton and Joyce operated a small print shop in Vancouver, Washington. They worked side by side every day, running the printing presses and making copies. At night, they closed up the shop together and went home to share dinner. During the holiday season, Velton took special care to buy Joyce something unique. He was always very thoughtful and, as Dawn remembers, took hours to pick something out. After the closure of the print shop in the mid-1980s, Joyce was diagnosed with breast cancer. While Joyce was in recovery, Velton worked several jobs to make ends meet.

By this time, Dawn and Daryn had moved out and gone on to pursue college degrees. In 1992, Velton and Joyce moved into their current home in Vancouver. He spent his days working for ShinEtsu America and filled his weekends with work as a night security guard for the Port of Vancouver. At the port, he watched ships unload their cargo and was able to stash a decent selection of scrap wood from leftover shipping palettes and crates; wood that he would later use in countless woodworking projects.

Between 1997 and 2005, Velton and Joyce became the proud grandparents of Dawn's daughter Emma, and Daryn's children Shereena, Niasha, and Ledge. He attended several of Emma's theatrical events and could consistently be counted on as a friendly face in the crowd. Shereena was always fond of Velton's ability to say a humble blessing before family meals and looked to his relationship with Joyce as an example of what a "beautiful marriage" looked like. Velton shared his birthday with Niasha and always celebrated with her every year. They called themselves the "birthday buddies" of the family and shared a special bond. In the summers, he enjoyed going to the Hillsboro Air Shows and was excited when Ledge was old enough to come along. He loved his grandchildren tremendously and eventually went on to purchase each one of them a koi fish to live in the backyard pond.

The backyard became the staging area for family events. Velton and Joyce hosted the annual Easter egg hunt and the Fourth of July fireworks extravaganza. Independence Day was always Velton's favorite holiday. He laid out his fireworks in the morning, created custom launch pads for the mortar shells and set off his fireworks using a portable blow torch for ignition.

In 2005, Velton retired and began working in his garage on countless woodworking projects. Over the years, he built several pieces of furniture for family members' homes. He built his granddaughter Emma a dresser with a 3D outline of a horse expanding over its five drawers. He built Dawn's in-laws a shelving unit to serve as a mini-pantry when they moved into a smaller space. For Dawn's office, he created a large desk with an adjustable keyboard stand and doors that allowed Dawn to completely close up her workspace at night. He even created a tiny balcony for a friend of the family's school production of Romeo and Juliet.

In his final years, Velton could still be found out in his woodshop or tinkering around in his yard. He was also an avid reader and especially enjoyed books about WWII and the Korean War. When it came time to start slowing down, Velton created an archway in front of his living room window from which he hung various bird feeders. He enjoyed the tranquility of watching hummingbirds, goldfinches, and chickadees visit his little bird sanctuary. In his final year, Velton became a great-grandfather to Shereena's first baby, Freya.

Velton was a quiet and reserved man with a huge heart for family and helping others. If anyone had a problem that needed a handyman's touch, Velton was the first person they'd call. He was always willing to lend a helping hand, and he was darn good at fixing things too.

Velton is survived by his wife of 59 years, Joyce, children Daryn (Trisha) and Dawn (Matt), grandchildren Shereena (David), Emma (Eric), Niasha, and Ledge, and one great-grandchild, Freya.

A memorial for Velton's life will be held at 12:30 PM, on Wednesday, July 21st, at Evergreen Memorial Gardens, 1101 NE 12th Ave, Vancouver, Washington.

Tribute Wall

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“ *We are thinking of you during this difficult time.*

Tina M. Nickolas and Family - July 09, 2021 at 12:00 AM

AO

“ *We are deeply sorry for your loss ~ Evergreen Memorial Gardens Cemetery, Funeral Chapel and Crematory*

A Memorial Tree was planted for Velton Ray Oden - July 06, 2021 at 12:00 AM