

## Ralph "Moon" Wheeler 1932-2014



Former Idaho State Senator, Ralph Merrill "Moon" Wheeler, Jr. passed away suddenly at his home in American Falls, Idaho on the morning of July 2, 2014. Moon was born in American Falls on August 10, 1932, the son of Ralph M., and Monne Zemo Wheeler. The Wheeler family homesteaded in the Rockland Valley in 1910. Moon was educated in American Falls, graduating from high school in 1950. He was active in athletics and was Student Body President. He graduated from Idaho State University in 1954 with a degree in Pharmacy. He returned immediately to American Falls, taking over the management of the Rockland Pharmacy from his father.

Moon's life was one of commitment and contributing, to family and community. He believed in his town, his county, his state and his country. He demonstrated that belief through his public service in his political career, and community activities. He was looked upon as a mentor by many he worked with. He was considered forthright and fair in addressing issues. He had 39 years in elected office, starting in 1957, and ending in 2002, with one six year gap. He served as a city councilman and mayor of American Falls (1957-1972), as a member of the Idaho State House of Representatives (1972-1976) Commissioner for Power County (1982-1994), and as an Idaho State Senator (1994-2002). During his two terms in the House, he was honored as the Outstanding New Legislator for Idaho by Rutgers University, and sponsored the bill establishing statewide kindergarten in the public schools. Moon was also the author of the Constitutional Amendment establishing the Idaho Legislative Compensation Committee in 1976. In 12 years as a Power County Commissioner, he spent much of that time as the Legislative Chair for the Idaho Association of Counties, and on the Board of SEICOG.

In 1994, Moon was elected to the Idaho State Senate, an honor he treasured. During his time there he served on Health and Welfare and Local Government and Taxation Committees, along with many interim committee assignments. He chaired the Indian Affairs Council, and was honored by the Idaho Tribes as an "adopted member". He served until the end of 2002. Throughout his years of public service,

Moon worked tirelessly to improve the treatment of, and for, the mentally ill.

Moon was a big Idaho State University supporter, and served on the ISU Alumni Board for some time. He was on the Dean's Advisory Board for the College of Pharmacy for many years, and was given the College of Pharmacy's Professional Achievement Award in 1999.

Moon was predeceased by his parents, his first wife, Pat, and two sons Edward, and Michael. He is survived by his loving family-his wife of 49 years, Ann, his children, Vickie Smith, Jodi Carlson, Clark Wheeler, and Ryan Wheeler, three grandchildren, and one great grandson. Several cousins and nephews also survive. He was a life-long member of the Catholic Church. A Mass of the Resurrection will be said at 11:00 Thursday morning, July10, 2014, at St. Mary's Catholic Church in American Falls, celebrated by Rev. Thomas Faucher. There will be a viewing on Wednesday night at 6:00 PM, followed by the saying of the Rosary at 7:00. There will be an additional viewing an hour before services on Thursday. Condolences and memories may be shared, and a full obituary is available at [davisrosemortuary.com](http://davisrosemortuary.com).