

Mark Becker, 77, of Moscow

Mark was born Jan. 16, 1937, in Cincinnati, Ohio, to John W. Becker and Marion Rombauer Becker of Newtown, Ohio.

In 1954, Mark graduated from George School, a Quaker boarding school near Newtown, Pa. He attended Haverford College, a leading liberal arts Quaker college near Philadelphia for two years. A life changing experience for Mark was a Quaker work project helping to paint and fix up houses in the slums of Philadelphia. The Quaker values of peace, justice and non-violence remained a strong influence in his life. Mark was a regular attendee at the Pullman-Moscow Friend's Meeting.

In 1956, Mark went to Portland, Ore. Mark fell in love with the old-growth forests and the Pacific Ocean, and he decided to make the Pacific Northwest his home. Mark met Jennifer Kay Chapin, a Reed College student. They married in Washington state in 1961. They made their home in Portland, Ore.

In 1965, their son Joe was born in Portland. Mark graduated from Portland State College with a major in English and a minor in science. He taught for two years at Aloha High School in the Beaverton, Ore., district, and at Sandy High School, in Sandy, Ore. Mark was active in the Bull Run Interest Group, an organization working to keep the Portland's water supply pristine and unpolluted.

Mark's favorite jobs were outdoors. He worked for the U.S. Forest Service as a surveyor in the Sweet Home and Mapleton forests of the Cascades. He also enjoyed working in a marine biology lab at the University of Oregon Health Sciences Center that provided many trips to the ocean to explore tide pools and collect specimens.

In the early '70s Mark and Jennifer built a small house in Sandy, Ore. Mark became self-employed, contracting with area nurseries to dig shrubs and trees for sale to landscapers. The work was physically demanding, however Mark liked figuring out how to get the more challenging plants out without damaging them.

Mark and his family moved to Bend, Ore., in 1981, where Mark was part of a successful effort to save some of the last remaining old-growth trees in the Cascades. He was also instrumental in creating the Environmental Center in Bend. Mark worked with others to shut down the Trojan Nuclear Power Plant.

Mark and Jennifer moved to Moscow, Idaho, in 1995 as they found the location provided a friendly, caring, international community with two universities and many cultural events. Mark was a generous supporter of many local nonprofit institutions. Mark cared about people and the environment, and he was a wonderful catalyst for getting others involved. He also organized a bipolar support group. Mark volunteered his time at Mary Jane's Farm when it first started. Mark will always be remembered for his unstinting work and the funds he contributed to enable Better Living Inc. to conduct summer programs for youths at Virgil Phillips Farm. Mark helped program participants create running and walking trails and learn the basics of gardening and how to keep a flock of turkeys, and he taught lessons on the flora and fauna of the Virgil Phillips Farm. Mark also volunteered at West Park Elementary School where he taught fourth-graders to play chess and accompanied them on field trips, often to the Phillips Farm. Mark was a man who acted on what he believed in.

Mark loved to read, hike in the wilderness, have conversations about politics and get involved in the community. He was friendly, good-natured and easy to talk to.

Mark is survived by his loving wife, Jennifer; son, Joe; his brother, Ethan; and his sister-in-law and brother-in-law, Sharon and Tosh Toji; as well as many nieces, nephews and friends.

Mark is the grandson of Irma Rombauer who wrote the Joy of Cooking and who inspired his love of fine food. Mark will be forever loved and remembered by his family and friends. His ashes will be scattered in the places that he loved.

Remembrances may be made in Mark Becker's name to KRFP, the Virgil Phillips Farm, Sojourner's Alliance, Backyard Harvest, or a charity of your choice.

A potluck memorial service will be 1-3 p.m. Jan. 25 at the 1912 Center.

