



# David Austen King

OCT 6, 1932 - FEB 11, 2020



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# David Austen King

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**D**avid Austen King  
1932-2020

– A Life Well-Lived –

Dave's full life came to a peaceful end February 11th, 2020, slipping away quietly in the presence of family and caregivers, not drawing a lot of attention to himself as was his typical behavior. Yet he had an enormous impact on those he touched in his life – family, students and community, and for this we are eternally grateful.

His journey began in 1932 (October 6th) during the depression in a small town in Minnesota (Waconia), son of county agent George and high school teacher Lucile King, and younger brother of George. His love of dogs began as a boy with Topsy and Patsy, as did his love of the outdoors with treks through local fields and forests in summer and winter. With the support of his father, he raised steers and sheep for 4H. He had prize winners at the county fair, one year winning best steer and sheep. He had to decide which to take to the State Fair – he selected the steer.

Unfortunately, tragedy struck in his teen years as both his parent's succumbed to illness and he found himself completing his senior year of high school in Chevy Chase, Maryland with his Uncle Teg and Aunt Kato Grondahl. Dave spent just over a year in the east completing high school, and then spent the summer in Maine at a young man's camp where he learned the joy of canoeing.

Dave decided to return to Minnesota and attend the University, living at the Farmhouse fraternity on the St. Paul campus. He majored in Forestry, graduating with a B.S. degree in 1954, and was enrolled in the ROTC program there. During his senior year he was named the "son" of Paul Bunyon for Forester's Day at the campus. The honor recognized him as the senior contributing most to the school's activities. These included editing the Gopher Peavy, the Forestry yearbook.

He met his wife to be during high school, Patricia Wagener, beginning a courtship and engagement spanning multiple years, states and countries. His courtship continued during his college years, making frequent trips to the College of St. Teresa for visits with Pat. They became engaged in the fall of 1954.



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Dave's ROTC military commitment began in January 1955 with the 16-week Anti-Aircraft Artillery Officer Basic Training in Ft. Bliss, TX. Upon completion, he earned the rank of Second Lieutenant and was assigned to the Army Security Agency Far East in Tokyo. He arrived there in July 1955, and shortly thereafter was assigned to Seoul, South Korea; from there he moved to a battalion in Uijongbu located 25 miles north of Seoul and not far from the DMZ. Their main mission was intelligence gathering. He spent 15 months in Korea, all at this same location, helping run a platoon. He and his fiancée Pat maintained an active correspondence during this time, saving their letters which they reread in the early 2010's. These letters formed the basis of "A Korean Memoir: 1955- 1956" written in 2012. During his stay in Korea, Dave began his life-long black and white photography hobby, with selected prints appearing in his memoir. He ended his military career as First Lieutenant, Artillery, USAR, on November 1, 1956 and received an Honorable Discharge from the Army Reserves on August 22, 1962.

The long-awaited wedding of Pat and Dave took place on November 10, 1956, in a small ceremony in Waconia followed by brunch, and then Dave and Pat started their 63-year journey together. Shortly after their wedding they left on a 3-week honeymoon on their way to Dave's job with the Forest Service in Fredonia, AZ, a town of 250 people north of Jacob's Lake on the north rim of the Grand Canyon. He worked cruising timber and conducting other forestry activities, and these experiences led to his second memoir "Junior Ranger". Pat returned to MN in early summer of 1957 to prepare for the arrival of their first child, while Dave returned later in the summer and worked as a teaching assistant in the School of Forestry. George was born in August in Waconia. Their second child, Thomas, was born in October of 1958 in the Twin Cities. Hence began Dave's role as father of two rambunctious, blonde-headed, crewcut-wearing boys. One of Dave's former undergraduate professors convinced him to enter graduate school at the University of MN to pursue a M.F. and Ph.D. in Forest Economics. He completed these two degrees in 1961 and 1965, respectively, on the St. Paul campus. His doctoral research was conducted during the summer in a small town in central Michigan. The whole family went along for part of the summer, and they rented a cabin heated with a wood stove and noted for its basement full of water.

During Dave's graduate career his non-school time was spent with his two growing sons and Pat in their home in Maplewood, a suburb of St. Paul. Heidi, a Brittany Spaniel, joined the family, and was the first of three Brittany's owned and trained for gamebird hunting by Dave. Outdoor recreation activities continued, including introducing the family to car camping and then to canoeing. Several trips were made into the Boundary Waters Canoe area, with all four family



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members and gear seated in Dad's beautiful Old Town green canvas and wood canoe. These trips culminated with a joint trip with his brother George's family of four in 1965. The first day was great, but at dinner a squall line rushed down the lake, drenching the dinner and campers making for a cold, watery meal of steak and potatoes.

Upon completing his doctoral degree, Arizona beckoned again, as Dave was offered a position at the University of Arizona in Tucson. There he began his 30-year University career as a professor in the Department of Watershed Management, later renamed the School of Renewable Natural Resources. During his career he mentored 15 Doctoral students and 27 Masters students, producing leaders in natural resource policy and planning, serving in academic and government positions across the United States and internationally. He was elected to The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi at UA in 1987. His research career centered on outdoor recreation economics and he had over 60 scholarly publications. Dave knew a lot of math, and his advice to his sons was to take as much math as possible in college.

Establishing roots in Tucson, Dave participated in a wide range of activities with his wife and growing sons, as well as individual hobbies that expanded in his retirement years. Foremost of these were two-week summer vacations to natural wonders in the Southwest, Rocky Mountains, and California, and then, as George and Tom reached their teens, backpacking with them either as part of Boy Scout Troop 199 or with Pat on family trips. Week-long backpacking trips in CO and AZ were annual events in the early to mid-70's, including two rim-to-rim-to-rim trips in the Grand Canyon. The Catalina, Chiricahua, and Rincon Mountains of southern Arizona were well-explored by the King's. As skills progressed Dave and his sons ventured down unmaintained trails on the Grand Canyon's South Rim, including the Boucher and Hermits trails, absorbing the majestic beauty, heat, and canyon vistas. Camps along the Colorado River were cool ends to long days. Dave was an intrepid hiker and supported the adventure requests of his sons, and they had wonderful times exploring mountainous regions.

Away from the fields and pheasants of Minnesota, Dave adapted to hunting Mearns quail in southern Arizona with Heidi and later Sandy. Day long trips to the shrublands in the foothills of the Santa Rita mountains would yield varying numbers of quail, carefully cleaned for an end of season celebratory dinner prepared by Pat. George, Tom, and Pat accompanied him on many a hunt, with George on the left, Dave in the middle, Tom of the right, and the dog bounding out in the lead. Flushing the quail was a helicopter-type sounding adventure for all. His dogs were very understanding as often when you shot at a bird you missed.



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After George and Tom left home for college and beyond, Dave and Pat began their international trips to Europe, to France, Scotland, Italy, Switzerland and Norway/Sweden. Paris was a frequent destination, where they would rent an apartment and get absorbed in the local environs. Every morning Dave would go out to the bakery to bring home croissants for breakfast, quite brave for someone who did not speak French. Trips to the ancestral home of the Kung's in Switzerland were also memorable, including a solo trek by Dave up into the Alps with an overnight stay at a mountain hut. Dave and Pat also spent a memorable six months on sabbatical in New South Wales in Australia in 1988, living in a house in the bush with frequent visitors of Australian wildlife. From their base in Armidale, they toured eastern Australia and made a trip to New Zealand.

In the fall of 1980 Dave and Pat bought a new adobe home in the Old Ft. Lowell Neighborhood, beginning a long and wonderful association with that community that continues to this day. Most noteworthy was their participation in the newly formed Old Fort Lowell Neighborhood Association (OFLNA) and the annual La Reunion. Dad became the editor of the OFLNA monthly publication the Old Fort Lowell Neighborhood Gazette. The Gazette focused on the cultural, natural and environmental aspects of the neighborhood that made it so special, as well as upcoming events and activities and how city government policies and actions would affect the neighborhood. Dave, with Pat's assistance as well, finalized each monthly issue and ensured its publication. Dave filled the role of editor for an amazing 20 years, with neighborhood member Terry Turner Hadley reflecting at the end of Dave's editorship: "During the seedling days of the OFLNA, it was clear that the new community needed not only a common past, but also a beloved present along with a delightful presence. Dave King, with his Gazette, has given both to the neighborhood with such grace, humor, thoughtfulness, inclusiveness and most apparent, love, that his nurturing has helped the little neighborhood on the banks of the Rillito to grow into the strong and mature association that it is now" (Old Fort Lowell Gazette January 2002). Asked what he felt most proud of Dave answered, "We produced some good stuff."

After retirement from the University in 1995, Dave began in earnest his black and white photography passion, converting a storage room in their house into a fully equipped dark room and buying several large format cameras that he took on his travels with Pat throughout the Southwest U.S. and to Europe. Landscapes, architecture and candid photos of people were his subjects, and he produced a catalog of outstanding photographs. He displayed his photos at the Old Ft. Lowell Artisans art show held in the beloved neighborhood chapel, and sons and grandchildren were frequent recipients of prints.



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Also, with retirement, Dave increased the frequency of his quail hunting adventures with his new Brittany, Teeka. She was quite the hunter, and Dave and Teeka made several trips to the Gray ranch in SW New Mexico. On one hunt, the professional hunting guide Ben Williams was impressed with her hunting ability, noting she ranged widely with awareness of wind direction and topography. One hunting season, Dave carefully recounted each trip with descriptive emails to family.

Central to his life in retirement was time spent with his wife Pat and their adventures together, followed closely by his time spent as Grandfather. Tom married Kelly Corkern, and George married Mary Santelmann, and soon grandchildren arrived, closely spaced, producing a cohort that Grandpa enjoyed immensely. Collin ('87), Spencer ('90) and Kathleen ('96), sons and daughter of Tom and Kelly, were joined with Geoffrey ('88), Rachel ('90) and Megan ('94), son and daughters of George and Mary. Although they lived in Las Cruces, NM and Corvallis, OR respectively, there were frequent visits with them. A highlight was the trip with the grandparents to Washington, D.C. when the grandchildren turned 10 years old. Collin and Geoffrey toured together, followed two years later by Rachel and Spencer, then Megan. Spencer joined Kathleen when it was her turn and they ventured to Phoenix to take in museums, delicious food and a Diamondback game. The highlight of the extended families time together with their grandparents and parents were the biannual summer trips to Greer, AZ, located at 8500 ft in the White Mountains of Central Arizona, beginning in 1997 and continuing until 2015. Dave rented the "Hacienda", a large log cabin situated on an acre of land on a large meadow at the south end of the very small community. The time there was spent hiking and fishing but always returning to the cabin for delicious meals and another round of extreme wilderness croquet. A porch extended the length of the cabin and during the course of a day family members would hang out there to watch the sky, storms, hummingbirds, and passersby. Grandpa always made sure to talk with everyone one on one.

Grandchildren grew and too soon became adults with their own lives, venturing to Tucson for visits as time permitted. Geoffrey married Emily Hutchison in Michigan, and Spencer married Kaitlin Sikes at Tom and Kelly's home outside of Las Cruces. Great granddaughter Harriet Eleanor King was born to Geoff and Emily on March 21, 2018 and was introduced to her great grandparents during Thanksgiving 2019. She was fascinated with the walking robot toy that has sat in their living room for many a year. Kaitlin and Spencer are expecting their first child in early June, a second great granddaughter.

Returning to Greer, one of the memorable events of these reunions was the group photograph of



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the grandchildren and family dogs on the front porch of the Hacienda, documenting the gathering. The picture was always taken late morning with sunshine and puffy white clouds set against a blue sky. Grandpa would set up one or more of his cameras and parents would try and corral the grandkids and dogs to be still for a second. With watchful parents, the pictures were taken. Too soon, fond goodbyes were said, and the families would depart while talking about the next gathering – where to fish and how to modify the croquet course.

Quite the journey for a boy from a small town in Minnesota. Dave/Dad/Grandpa will be greatly missed.

Donations in lieu of flowers may be made to the Old Fort Lowell Neighborhood Association Inc, 5230 E. Fort Lowell Road, Tucson, AZ 85712. (<https://oldfortlowellneighborhood.org/>).

Services are pending at this time.

Please check back for further details.

Thank you.



## Tribute Wall

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RM

**Rose Santellano-Milem** posted:

Hello my dear Pat and King family, We were so sorry to learn of Dave's passing. Thank you for sharing some of his life highlights in his obituary. It was nice to learn where he came from, about his many adventures, and of his love of life and love of his family. I met Pat at church and we became immediate friends. Through Pat, my husband Jeff and I met Dave. Both Dave and Jeff were professors at the UA, although at different times. I found it interesting that they were both similar in personalities; sharp wits and a good sense of humor. We enjoyed the times we spent with Dave and Pat in their beautiful Ft. Lowell home. We have fond memories of viewing Dave's beautiful photography in their home and at the Ft. Lowell Artists Showcase. Dave and Pat were always so welcoming and gracious hosts. When Pat was ill, Dave did his best to take care of her and their home. And then Dave got sick and Pat did her best to care for both of them. The one thing I will never forget is their dedication, love, and caring they had for one another, their love was beautiful. I got to witness this when I visited. We moved from Tucson to Santa Barbara, a few years back. Dave and Pat were friends we knew we were going to miss, which ended being so true. Dave and Pat, thank you for your friendship. Love you, Jeff and Rose

March 16 at 7:22 AM

PB

**Perry Brown** posted:

It was wonderful to be able to read some of the highlights of Dave's life. I do hope that his family has had a time to celebrate his well lived life and all that he has meant to many people. Though we were not in close contact after we moved from Oregon to Montana, Dave was always one of my favorite colleagues. He was a genuine and warm colleague; it was really a pleasure to work with him. His academic legacy lives on through his many students. Perry Brown

March 13 at 11:48 AM



**William Stewart** posted:

Dave lived a wonderful life with a lasting impact on all he met. During my graduate studies in the mid-1980's, Dave brought me into his group of students and taught me about creative thinking and learning -- which to this day, still influences what I do and why I do it. Modest, chatty, thoughtful, and good humored -- conversations with Dave were the best! I remember so many fun parties he and Pat would host for graduate students in their cozy Ft Lowell home. I miss him a lot, and along with Yumiko, send warm hugs and fond memories to Pat and family. Bill Stewart

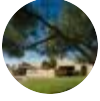
February 28 at 2:40 AM



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**Evergreen Mortuary, Cemetery & Crematory** shared 2 photos to the **Memories Album** album.

February 14 at 9:14 AM





# Media

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**Evergreen Mortuary, Cemetery & Crematory** shared 2 photos to the **Memories Album** album.

February 14 at 9:14 AM





# Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring David by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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