

In Memoriam

Gary L Talbert

Gary Talbert, 85, a native of **Sedro Wooley, WA**, passed away peacefully on Monday evening, August 7th, at his home in **Oak Harbor** surrounded by his wife, **Claudean**, and other family members. **Gary** is survived by **Claudean**, and two adult children, **Erin** and **Shannon**, both residing in California.

Gary's first dealings with **WWA** didn't go well. As a **Life Member** of the **California Waterfowl Assn., (CWA)**, the **Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF)** a \$10,000 donor to **Ducks Unlimited (DU)**, some **Benefactor level of Life Membership** with the **NRA**, and probably others he didn't talk about — for two years he hounded the **WWA powers-that-be** to establish a **Life Member Program** here. Finally in February of 2010, **WWA** relented, and fittingly **Gary** received the recognition of **WWA Life Member No. 1**.



Gary quickly got involved with **WWA**, first as a member of the **Board of Directors**, and later as **Membership Director**. Drawing on his business acumen and experience as owner of a couple of health gyms in CA, **Gary** knew how to build membership. In 2011, he put together the then largest **Membership Drive** in **WWA** history with 10 prizes, including two (2) brand new shotguns (or cash equivalent of \$1,000 and \$750 respectively) and of course a **WWA Life Membership**. In 2014, he doubled that with another **WWA Membership Drive**, this time with 20 prizes, including three (3) new shotguns; three (3) Guided and/or Hosted Hunts for Two; Five (5) cases of shotshells; and of course two (2) more **WWA Life Memberships**.

At the 2010 **WWA Corporate Banquet**, **Gary** challenged all members to upgrade their existing **WWA** memberships to Life Memberships, and he would pay the first \$125 to all takers. At the 2011 banquet, he challenged again, and this time upped his ante to paying the first \$150 for all members taking up his challenge.

From this humble beginning, **WWA** initially established two levels of Life Membership – Regular at \$500 and Sustaining at \$750. In June of 2021 — again at the prodding of **Gary** — **WWA** converted from two (2) to three (3) different levels of Life Membership acknowledging that “**ALL WWA Life Memberships Are “Sustaining” to the organization**.” Those three (3) new levels were: **Bronze** Level Life Membership at \$500.00; **Silver** Level Life Membership at \$1,000.00; and **Gold** Level Life Membership at \$2,000.00.

But **Gary** wasn't done there. In May of 2022, **Gary** proposed a new level of **WWA Life Membership** — **Platinum** Level Life Membership at \$5,000. At first, **WWA Corporate Leadership** was reluctant, but then **Gary** made them an “offer they couldn't refuse.” He would donate \$7,000 to **WWA** to establish a **Fund** to pay the first \$200 of any **WWA** member wishing to upgrade their membership to any level of Life Membership! Today, fully 33 of the 72 Life Members listed on the **Life Member Page X**, owe all or part of their **WWA Life Membership** to **Gary's** generosity!



Gary wouldn't allow any of this information to be published here while he was alive. But from this day forward that **Fund** will be known as the **Gary Talbert Life Membership Endowment Fund!**

God's Speed to our Good Friend.

The less serious side of Gary Talbert:
At left he is shown feeding waterfowl in front of his home in Oak Harbor during the harsh winter of 2010. Then he went outside and posed for this photo of ducks raining down on him, with the caption:
“Duck hunting has been good at my place!”