



## Berkley Bedell

March 5, 1921 - December 7, 2019

Berkley Warren Bedell, age 98, passed away on December 7, 2019 three days after suffering a massive stroke in Naples, FL. A third generation of Spirit Lake, IA, he was born on March 5, 1921. Growing up with two loving parents, Walter and Virginia Bedell and a younger brother, Jack, his life was filled with fishing, hunting, and hanging out with the South Side Gang – a harmless group of neighborhood friends who loved fishing, hunting and the magical life in a small town surrounded by lakes and wildlife.

In 1937, while still in high school, he began tying fishing flies and selling them in a local tackle shop. With the encouragement of his family, his natural entrepreneurial instincts encouraged him to develop fishing leaders and the beginning of what became Berkley & Co. He attended Iowa State University where he met the love of his life, Elinor Healy. He continued his fishing tackle business until World War II called. Joining the Army Air Corps, he became a flight instructor. Elinor and Berkley were married August 29, 1943.

After the war, Berk and Elinor returned to Spirit Lake and restarted Berkley & Co which grew rapidly. From Steelon leaders to Trilene fishing line, Berkley's inventiveness introduced new and better products into the fishing tackle market, enabling him to employ hundreds of local people and home workers. The company expanded into multiple locations – finally consolidating into a new factory building on highway 71 where it remains today. In 1964 he was honored by President Lyndon Johnson as the country's first Small Businessman of the Year. Berks was inducted into the Fresh Water Fishing Hall of Fame, the Bass Fishing Hall of Fame, and the Iowa Business Hall of Fame.

Berkley was active in community affairs. He was a member of the Spirit Lake United Methodist Church, a founding member of the Spirit Lake Kiwanis Club and a Mason. He served on the Spirit Lake School Board. Many people will recall his mentorship as a Boy Scout leader, the record number of Eagle Scouts and the annual canoe trips to the Boundary Waters.

Berk served as the president of the American Fishing Tackle Manufacturing Association,

and the Iowa Manufacturing Association. He was active in the Young Presidents Organization. He served on the Board of Trustees of Morningside College, American University, and Claremont School of Theology.

In 1974 he was elected to represent Iowa's 6th District in the US Congress. He served for twelve years until his retirement in 1987 because he contracted Lyme's disease. In Congress he served on the Agriculture Committee and chaired the Small Business Committee. He also represented the United States on the UN Convention on Law of the Seas.

When his health returned, he lobbied Congress to establish an Office of Alternative Medicine (OAM) in the National Institutes of Health. He served on the advisory board. Becoming frustrated that OAM did not aggressively consider alternate medical practices, he founded the Foundation for Alternative and Integrative Medicine in 1998 which continues today.

Berkley contributed in countless ways to the quality of life in the Iowa Great Lakes from co-leading the Save The Park funding drive for Arnolds Park, to being a founding member of the Okoboji Foundation. He and Elinor contributed land to create Elinor Bedell State Park in Spirit Lake , Iowa.

While being remembered for his achievements, most people think of Berk for his leadership, his kindness, his compassion and his activeness to make a difference – not just in big causes, but in individual people's lives. He was alive with empathy and always ready to take on injustice.

Berkley was preceded in death by his wife of 73 years, Elinor Healy Bedell, his brother, Jack Bedell, and his parents, Virginia and Walter Bedell. He is survived by three children, Ken Bedell (Kathie) of Westminster, CO, Tom Bedell (Molly) of Bend, OR, and Joanne Quinn (Mike) of Loveland, CO, eight grandchildren and twelve great grandchildren.

A visitation will be held at Peace Harbor, 16216 Hwy 86, Spirit Lake, IA 51360 on Friday, July 24th beginning at 5:00 pm. Parking is available across the street. A memorial celebration is planned for July 25, 2020 at the United Methodist Church in Spirit Lake at 11:00 a.m. A luncheon will follow in Wesley Place. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be sent to the Foundation for Alternative and Integrative Medicine, P.O. Box 2860, Loveland, CO 80538. The Schuchert-Lentz Funeral Home in Spirit Lake is serving the family.

# Comments

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“ Berkley was one of the most remarkable people I have met in my life. Really, really exceptional in every way. Because of his fundamental modesty and decency, most of his good deeds will never be recorded, but will reverberate in this world far into the future. He was the driving force behind the formation of the Office of Alternative Medicine (OAM), and was able to inspire his former colleagues in Congress—most prominently Tom Harkin—to put some of the government's resources behind an objective evaluations of such treatments. In this way, he made a permanent contribution to the welfare of mankind. I spoke to him a few months ago and he was as lucid as 20 or 30 years ago. My condolences to his entire family. --Ralph W. Moss, PhD

**Ralph W Moss** - January 16 at 04:04 PM

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“ Never had the opportunity to met Mr. Bedell however I would certainly thank him for the work, time, effort and energy he put forth in establishing the Foundation for Alternative and Integrative Medicine in 1998 and which continues today. Integrative medicine has been and continues to be of great benefit to many individuals around the world! Thank you Mr. Bedell.

**Marcia B., RN, CRNI, CHTP** - January 07 at 10:52 PM

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“ I never met Berkley but I am one of the millions of lives he impacted. Thank you for your service to this great country and for being with me on all my fishing trips. Without your products they would have been short ones. God bless, rip.

**Dennis Shiley** - December 17, 2019 at 12:48 PM