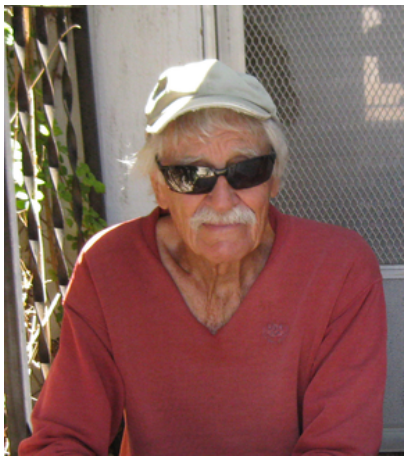

Robert Russell Ryburn

September 24, 1928 ~ June 12, 2022

Robert Russell Ryburn was born September 24, 1928 in Dillon, Montana to Frank Graves Ryburn and Geraldine Smith Ryburn. He passed from this life on June 12, 2022 at age 93.

As a child he attended school in Bannack, Montana and, later, when the family moved to town, in Dillon.

During World War II, his father, Frank worked in the shipyards and the family relocated to Long Beach, CA. His house was just a short walk from the ocean and Bob and his friends swam, body surfed, and soaked up the sun every day. He also loved playing pick-up basketball in his neighborhood. After returning to Dillon, Bob graduated with 46 others from Beaverhead County High School in the class of 1946. Several of his classmates remained life-long friends.

Bob loved hard physical work and was quite competitive when it came to cutting timber with hand-held saws with the Forest Service, spiking “over-the-rail” when he worked for the railroad, and even shoveling snow with his children. He was an avid runner and often spent time in the foothills above the U of U. As he aged, his bike became both his means of transportation and his daily workout.

He served in the army in Korea from 1951-1953, and worked with the Engineering Corp rebuilding bridges to allow US troops to advance.

He met June Miller in Los Angeles, CA. They married August 25, 1954. They later divorced. Together they had 3 children; Diane, Frank, and Lorene.

After attending art school in Chicago, Robert worked for various art agencies in Portland and Spokane before moving the family to Salt Lake City in 1961.

He was a perfectionist in various areas, including his art. He worked for many years in Men’s Fashion Illustration for Salt Lake City businesses such as ZCMI, Wolfe’s, and Auerbach’s. Since his studio was in the home, he was able to be there for his kids after school and was somewhat of a mystery to those who worked downtown in the Art Departments of the retailers who sold men’s clothing using his ads.

In 1986, he rebuilt his life through the VA’s AA program.

He retired to Arizona, first to Tucson, then Patagonia and finally to Yuma in 2004. He was content there riding his bike 8-10 miles a day, playing pool with his friends, and feeding the birds and rabbits that visited his yard daily. The simplicity of his life helped him stay sober and contributed to him being able to live on his own into his 90’s.

As dementia began to impact his life, his last year was spent in Sandy, Utah. He enjoyed taking care of Ginger the dog, riding his stationary bike, and watching or listening to games. Some of his favorite days were the ones when he could sit on the patio and soak up the sun.

Survived by his cousin Jean Lay Landers, children: Diane Edwards (Floyd), Frank Ryburn, grandchildren: Robert Edwards (Kori), Alicia Skousen (Geoff), Michelle Esplin (Artumus), Janice Edwards and Nathan Edwards (Codi). Great-grandchildren: Jeremy Edwards, Kiaya Edwards, Abby Skousen, Lizzy Skousen, Bee Skousen, Liam Esplin, Xander Edwards, Millie Edwards. Preceded in death by June Miller Ryburn, Lorene Ryburn Wells.

Special thanks to the health care workers at the VA Hospital in Salt Lake City, The Utah Veterans Home, and Harmony Home Health and Hospice for their care and kindness.