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## **Obit: Fredrick Silven 'Fritz' Hill**

Jun 16, 2020



Hill

**Pendleton**

**September 17, 1941 — May 24, 2020**

Fredrick Silven (Fritz) Hill died peacefully at home on May 24, 2020, after a long illness and a life well lived. Let it be said that he never knew a stranger. A private family graveside service will be held on June 20, with a Celebration of Life planned for the fall.

Fritz was born on September 17, 1941, in Pendleton, Oregon, to Fredrick Waylen and Jean Silven Hill, joining his older sister Ann Terry Hill. He grew up on the family wheat ranch in Juniper Canyon where he started working at an early age: milking cows, mowing the lawn, slopping pigs, and washing dishes in the cook house. His first business operation was trapping gophers. When he ran out of gophers close to home, he extended his trap line down the canyon to Terjeson's and kept charging his dad five cents a kill. When he was old enough to work harvest, he would take his pay to Barnham's Trading Post to buy guns. (This was well before laws that prohibited selling armaments to minors under 12.)

Fritz was a showman at an early age. He showed the grand champion steer in the 1955 Pacific International, as a 14-year-old kid. This was after the 1954 showing incident when Fritz's steer took off running as they entered the show grounds dragging him, swearing at the top of his lungs, to the end of the ring. The steer then laid down and refused to budge. The crowd went wild!

Fritz attended grade school in Helix and transferred to Pendleton High School, graduating in 1959. He attended Oregon State University on the five-year plan and graduated with an Agriculture degree in 1964. He joined his father's fraternity, Phi Delta Theta, ROTC (later

enlisting in the Marines), and worked at Phil Small's clothing store. Fritz admitted to spending more time in Gill Coliseum playing basketball than in ag classes. He worked as manager for the OSU basketball team under Slates Gill.

Desperate for sunshine, Fritz transferred to Mexico State College winter term 1963 to play basketball for their traveling team. He boarded with a Mexican family, bought a scooter, and carried a Spanish language note in his pocket with his address, in case he got lost exploring Mexico City.

After college and 11 months hitchhiking around Europe, Fritz returned home to join his father in the Hill Ranches farming operation as a fourth-generation farmer. He was active in numerous ag organizations, was a no-till conservation advocate, and he made a name for himself as an ag humorist, speaking at numerous agricultural events in the Pacific Northwest.

Fritz performed in the Happy Canyon Night Show for 25 years and was inducted into the Round-Up & Happy Canyon Hall of Fame in 2014. He played city league basketball, won top awards in Toastmaster speech contests, and played Uncle Johnny in Pendleton Underground Comes Alive events. He served on the boards of Happy Canyon, Pendleton Underground Tours, Pendleton Credit Union and Umatilla County Wheat Growers.

He is preceded in death by his parents. He is survived by his sister Ann Terry Hill; former wife Mary Ann Hill, and sons Bill (Jodi), Jason (Janelle) and Winston (Kirbie) Hill; wife Karen Hill; grandchildren Kate, Grace, Farley and Lincoln Hill; and stepchildren Kari Gallinger and Adrienne (Robert) Wilson, and their children Haley, Blake, Lauren, Claire and Josephine.

Memorial contributions may be made to support the Happy Canyon Room Renovation at the Pendleton Convention Center. (Checks must be made out to fiscal agent GEODC, c/o Pendleton Convention Center, 1601 Westgate, Pendleton OR 97801.)

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