



# MIKE EVERITT

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Children: Ronda, Michael, Jeff, Brian and Josh

Grandchildren: Kylee, Tyler, Andrew, Nicholas, Alyse, Jasmine, Briley, Brayden

Great-grandchildren: Ambri, Miyah, Adalyn, Abigail

After graduation I attended OCE and thanks to the encouragement of Don Sheldon, I played basketball but unfortunately did poorly academically. The next two years I attended Central Oregon Community College in Bend. Central Oregon was a good fit for me. I ran cross-country and played basketball, did well academically and moved on to Eastern Oregon College in LaGrande. I continued on the cross country team for two years and graduated in 1968 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Elementary Education.

I returned to Salem where I taught fifth grade at Liberty Elementary. The principal at the time was Steve Irving who was also the principal at Swegle when I was in first grade. The world seems so small at times.

In 1970, I was drafted into the military. I was given a choice of services so I selected the Air Force where I qualified for Officer School and Pilot Training. The only glitch was that the flight school class was for helicopters not fixed wing aircraft. Although disappointed, I signed up, a decision that would provide me with great satisfaction. I was sent to Basic Training then Officer School. Upon completion and being commissioned a second lieutenant, I was off to flight school. Because all helicopter training in the military is conducted by the Army I was first sent to Fort Wolters in Mineral Wells, Texas for the initial phase of training then it was onto Fort Rucker in Dothan, Alabama for advanced training, Graduation and awarding of our wings. I selected what I believe was the cream of the crop assignment. It was an HH 53 rescue helicopter to Thailand. The assignment required four additional months of training at Hill Air Force Base in Ogden, Utah. Upon completion of that training I was sent to Nakhon Phanom (NKP) Royal Thai Air Force Base in Thailand. Our mission was to rescue pilots and other crew members that were shot down. We flew into North and South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. It was a year of adventure, excitement and some sadness. It was a defining time in my life and I would do it again if given the chance.



From there I was assigned to the 6594<sup>th</sup> Test Group at Hickam Air Force Base in Honolulu, Hawaii. This assignment was unique by Air Force standards and one that Rand Wittermute might relate to. It involved the recovery of space hardware. The mission has since been declassified but involved the recovery of spy satellite capsules. With our helicopter, we would fly out to sea and land on a ship and spend 7 to 10 days at a time awaiting the recovery of the next capsule. It was a very interesting and intriguing assignment. While in Hawaii my life really changed in ways I could not have imagined when I met my wife to be, Shirley.

In 1975, I left active-duty and we returned to Salem. I joined an Air Force Reserve Helicopter Flying Unit at Portland International Airport and for the next 18 years flew numerous rescue missions throughout the Northwest. While our main mission was training for combat rescue, we were kept busy rescuing mountain climbers, lost hikers and victims of aircraft and automobile accidents. We recovered 61 people from Mount Saint Helens when it

erupted. I retired from the Air Force in 1993 with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

In 1977, I resumed my teaching career while maintaining my reserve flying status. I taught 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> grades for six years at Bethel Elementary, 6<sup>th</sup> grade for 12 years at Scott Elementary and 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades for five years at Stephens Middle School. I enjoyed all my years of teaching but must say middle school was a hoot. Raging hormones and daily drama kept me thoroughly entertained. Were we really that goofy?

I retired from teaching in 2000, did some substitute teaching for about three years and then was too busy with other things. In 1982, I received my Masters degree in Elementary Education and Administration from Portland State. In 1984, I started a hay baling business and in 2000 became a full-time farmer. We own a 93 acre farm on Summit Loop, south of Turner, and rent several hundred acres in the local area where we raise grass seed, wheat and a variety of hay crops.

Shirley and I have five children: Ronda, Michael, Jeffrey, Brian and Josh. We have eight grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Our most recent great grand daughters are twins; Adalyn Hope and Abigail Rose, born 11-7-11. They are adorable and live next-door to us so we see them daily. Come prepared to debate adorable! We enjoy having most of our family close by with many family gatherings at the farm. Shirley and I enjoy trips in the motor home and the good life we share.

Like so many of you, I too wonder where the 50 years went, but I also wonder how it passed so quickly. I look forward to hearing the expanded version of your fifty-year journey. I wish all of you good health, longevity and the fulfillment of years yet to come.