



John Daniel "Danny" Gebbers

October 17, 1930 - October 21, 2014

John Daniel Gebbers was born October 17th, 1930 in Omak, WA as the only child to John Gebbers and Martha Gamble Gebbers. Danny's grandfather, Dan Gamble, was an early pioneer in the Brewster area where he helped establish the new town's steamboat landing, the Gamble Hotel, a sawmill known as Gamble Lumber Company as well as planting the first apple orchards in the local. Danny's mother, Martha Gamble, was also born in Brewster and was presented a hand made deerskin baby suit soon after her birth by the Chief Long Jim family. It was in this setting that young Danny Gebbers grew up on his family's sawmill, orchards, apple warehouse, and cattle ranch during the Great Depression. As an only child he remembered many of his friends being the older sawmill workers and the cowboys who worked in the family operations. Some of his earliest memories were going south each winter with his parents to sell apples on the streets of Los Angeles, Las Vegas and Phoenix to help make ends meet during the difficult financial times of the Depression. It was also during this time period that the "Danny Boy" apple label was first established using a rendering of his baby picture while sitting on his Granddad's lap. The Danny Boy label is still used by the family operations today and is recognized around the world for its quality.

Danny grew up learning all facets of the family business. At times he worked stacking lumber with his cousin, Howard Gamble, in the family's sawmill.

Howard later became the long time mayor of Brewster and forty year administrator of the Brewster hospital. Danny spent many hours in the saddle of his horse working with his father, John, on the family cattle ranch at his beloved Paradise Hill where he learned to become an excellent cowboy and calf roper. He often competed in several local rodeos and was the Champion calf roper at the Brewster Derby Days Rodeo in 1951. Over the years, Danny learned about building roads, constructing livestock ponds, developing springs, planning timber harvests and general forest conservation from the family forester, Ray Warner. In those days wearing many hats was expected so Danny also spent time learning about the orchard business and apple packing industry from his parents. His father, John, ran the orchards and cattle while his mother, Martha, ran the warehouse and sawmill.

Danny attended Brewster schools, graduating from BHS in 1948. While attending Brewster schools, he became goodfriends with his own generation of local tribal members when they played on the town's ball teams together and they remained friends throughout all of the years. During grade school he met and became friends with his life long business partner Ed Pariseau. With a big imagination for business and a knack for seeing opportunities, Danny was no fan of school so he only briefly attended Eastern Washington State College, which he claimed was only to keep his mother happy, before embarking on a life of entrepreneurial adventure.

In 1950 he married BHS graduate, Reba Riggan, and they had six children, five who grew into adulthood and four who presently live in Brewster working for the family company, Gebbers Farms. They also have twenty grandchildren of which fourteen are home from college and involved in different aspects of the family business. This was always one of Danny's primary goals in life. He wanted to create something big enough and worthy enough to allow him to have his kids and grandkids around him because as he always said, "It was no fun growing up alone."

Danny led a life of adventure and hard work. After he left college, one of his most noted adventures was a hunting trip to the Northwest Territories that was filmed by outdoor filmpioneer, Gordon Eastman, and has been shown on The Outdoor television channel. Gordon Eastman, Ed Pariseau and Danny Gebbers had been friends since childhood when they competed against each other at the Omak Gun Club during marksmanship events. That strong friendship blossomed into many years of hunting and fishing trips around the Northwest, Canada and Alaska. Gordon's son, Mike Eastman, has continued on with his father's outdoor film business and recently completed a documentary in which Danny describes the history and tells the stories of their early years of outdoor filming and hunting adventures. This documentary can also be seen on the Outdoor Cannel.

Never being one to turn down an opportunity, Danny and Ed decided they would pursue mining.

Together, with the help of Ed's brother Bill, a mining engineer from Utah, and an old sawmill hand named Slick, they sought out and established mining claims in the remote and mountainous area of East Creek, WA. They named their mine the Gold Hill and diligently kept up the assessment work on an annual basis for over fifty years! They frequently travelled throughout the North Cascades by backpacking or horseback as they prospected for the next potential mineral discovery. Their prospecting trips usually seemed to double as scouting trips for that next great big game hole or provided another notch on the handle in their pursuit to have covered every mile of trail and fished every possible pool the Pasayton Wilderness had to offer.

Danny had a vast array of other interests including antiques and their history. He was an avid collector of items pertaining to the exploration and settlement of the American West. His trade gun collection, fur trade memorabilia and

fighting weapons of the horse culture period are extensive. He was a lifelong historian and an expert on that time period having sometimes thought he was simply born in the wrong era.

Danny was always unafraid to move forward, even when times were hard and others were afraid to take a chance. He continued to expand his business over the years despite the state of the economy, and the expansion of Gebbers Farms is a product of his vision.

With World War II in full swing and needing additional employees for their sawmill and orchard operations, Danny's mother was an original adaptor of the Bracero guest worker program. Several of these Mexican men became close to the family and they remained friends with both Martha and Danny for many years to come. This was an important point in the development of who Danny Gebbers was. He realized that the hard working men and women were the guts of his family's operation and he continued to build a strong reputation for always taking good care of his employees and later created partnerships and other opportunities for the people who worked for him.

Danny was also an original participant in the Japanese Agricultural Training program which brought young Japanese men and women to the US via Big Bend Community College where they studied English before spending the next two years at the host farmer's home. This year marks the 46th year of participation in the JAT program for the Gebbers family. Over the years Danny, along with other family members, travelled to Japan to meet and stay with their former agricultural exchange students and tour their farms.

Guest workers and Foreign students were a regular feature at the Danny Gebbers operations and over the years became a mainstay for the family by creating a diverse cultural experience and opportunity for all who passed through. In 1975 Danny sponsored a Vietnamese family and later when the Soviet Union opened up, Ukrainians. He took great pride in following up with as many of these people as possible and to this day has continued to have

lasting friendships with them all over the world.

Danny recognized that the apple industry could use a new variety, and established one of the first, if not the first, Granny Smith orchards in the United States in 1968, an orchard which is still producing today near the Brewster airport. As part of the growth plan, he converted all of his father's Department of Natural Resource winter cattle grazing leases into permanent fruit tree plantings which formed the backbone of the orchard operations called P&G Orchards. For many years it was the largest Granny Smith planting in the world.

Danny and Ed embraced early day controlled atmosphere storage, a technology for storing apples all year long.

Together, after several years of research, they brought some of the first pre-sizer apple sorting technology to the area from France in 1974. To accomplish this, they worked closely with a leading French grower and packer, Pierre Herman and visited his operations in person.

Danny was looking for another opportunity when he met Dr. Lapin of the Summerland, BC Tree Fruit Research Station and planted one of the first commercial Lapin cherry orchards in Washington when he brought the late maturing Canadian variety to the forefront of July production and marketing, setting a new precedent in later cherries. The original Lapin cherry orchard is still producing today near Brewster as well as at the high elevation cherry orchards he established on the slopes of Lake Chelan.

Danny always had a passion for heavy equipment and what it could do to help shape the land into something more productive. He may not have known where the keys went to start that equipment but like an artist with a blank canvas, he knew what he wanted the finished picture to look like. He had an uncanny ability to see a piece of bare land and visualize what it would look like when it was developed. He always knew the most advantageous way to plant an orchard considering location, drainage and wind patterns. He had a

sense of looking into the future and making wise decisions on land purchases that would increase in value, purchasing water rights before others would even think about it, purchasing forest land for grazing, looking at land in other areas, and always looking for new varieties of fruit to plant. Danny had enormous respect for the land. He did not purchase land to split up and sell. He valued the dirt as the basic foundation of everything he did. One of his favorite sayings when he recognized something of lasting value or unique beauty was, "That's a real pisscutter."

Danny was an honest man. He and Reba raised their children with strong Christian values and taught them to carry on for God. Like his mother, Martha, he had respect for his employees and would not turn his back when they were in need. This strong character is seen in each and every one of his children and now his grandchildren. Dan and his family, like Martha before him, have done so many things for the Brewster community throughout the years. For example, he partnered with and built the Brewster IGA Grocery Store (now Brewster Marketplace) on Highway 97 in 1970 with partner Loris Gillespie, also a BHS graduate.

Dan Gebbers's legacy is that he believed it was possible to have a successful business in Brewster that could create opportunity for his kids, grandkids, and employees to grow with as well. In a few words, Danny was creative, imaginative, intelligent, and compassionate, all while adamantly remaining under the radar, refusing any recognition other than knowing a job was done right.

Previous Events

Visitation

OCT **29**. 3:00 PM - 8:00 PM (PT)

Barnes Chapel
510 W. Indian Avenue
PO Box 306
Brewster, WA 98812
(509) 689-3494
mike@prechtrose.com

Service

NOV **1**. 11:00 AM (PT)

Brewster High School
503 S. 7th Street
Brewster, WA 98812

Tribute Wall



“ *John Daniel "Danny" Gebbers*

January 29, 2023 at 08:49 AM



“ *Our thoughts and prayers are with the entire Gebbers "Family". Meeting him during Gamble project and spending time at the Gamble WAC reception was a true honor and very memorable experience.*

What an incredible legacy he left to family and all he came into contact with over the years.

Very Best personal regards,

*Robert W. Thorpe, AICP - President
R. W. Thorpe & Associates, Inc.
2737 78th Avenue SE, Suite 100
Mercer Island, WA 98040*

Robert Thorpe - November 04, 2014 at 06:11 PM



“ *Karl Word lit a candle in memory of John Daniel "Danny" Gebbers*



karl word - November 03, 2014 at 08:28 AM

RA

“ *Sincerest condolences on the loss of your father, grandfather, great grandfather and family member of the Gebbers family, Dan Gebbers. My deepest sympathies as it is always hard to lose a close loved one.*

Warmest regards and I will be thinking of the Gebbers family at this sad time.

Rose Adams

Farm & Ranch Broker NW

Riverside, WA

11-1-14



Rose Adams - November 01, 2014 at 03:52 PM

JA

“ I never had the opportunity to meet Danny in person. My father in law worked for the Gebbers family in the orchards for over 30 years and when he passed away, the entire family was very supportive of our family and continued to provide housing for my mother in law after he passed for an extensive period of time to allow her to grieve. My husband has worked for the Gebbers family for over 18 years. First with his dad in the orchards, then in the packing shed and now in refrigeration. My husband takes great pride in his work and works exceedingly hard for the Gebbers family. (We know, because work never ends..even when it's dinner time, bedtime, any time) But we approach it as a team effort because we understand how important his work is to him. I know in my heart that Danny's legacy of working hard and caring for each other extends to not only his family but the employees that work for his family, who only want to make the Gebbers family proud. Thank you to the entire family for being a stability to the community and to my family. I hope that Danny's memory lives on in ways that you cannot imagine. God bless all of his family and friends during this difficult time. Peace be with you.

Jamie Arevalo, wife of Jorge Arevalo, Jr.



Jamie Arevalo - November 01, 2014 at 01:38 AM

SS

“ I send this with great sorrow for the loss of your father Dan Gebbers. Its hard to explain how we the Stout family, feel. He was a great friend. I will always remember a long time ago his dad John and him along with my dad Paul and I were driving cows at the base of Dent mountain. The two dads were just ahead of us and Dan and I were visiting He said "I really don't care about the cows but I would like to have a big orchard". And he certainly did it with the help of his family and his dream came true. When I worked for Gebbers farms a couple years ago Dan and I had several chances to visit.. And I stated that I had heard several people say they sure didn't like everything that he was doing and I said I think it was jealousy more than anything else. Then I said "Dan, you and your kids certainly built a big empire here." He turned to me and said "there's one hell of a lot of trees aren't there?" with a big smile. I want you kids to know we the Stouts will always remember your dad, Dan Gebbers, and your family. So Mac, Sonya, Jody and Cass hold your heads high and say "thanks Dad". Stan and Rena Stout and family

Stan and Rena Stout - November 01, 2014 at 12:31 AM

CA

“ Rest In Paradise Danny!

Chris & Anna - October 31, 2014 at 10:02 AM

KB

“ Danny was a wonderful man. Always a gentleman. He will be truly missed. So glad he came to our last party.



Kim Brender - October 30, 2014 at 10:51 PM

DM

“ My sincere condolences go to the Gebbers family. Though I hadn't talked to Danny for many years, my memories of him remain strong. His influence helped me develop a strong work ethic. My step-grandfather, Sam Morris, managed the Gebbers orchard out on the Brewster Bar for many years. I know how well Danny and his parents treated my grandparents during all those years. Then as a high school student I worked on that orchard during the summer and some part-time after school started. It was August of 1959 that I remember Danny the most. He was watching me assemble wooden apple boxes on the loading ramp of the Herman Tract. My grandfather was approaching retirement time, and Danny said I should think about taking over managing the orchard when Sam retired since I knew it better than anyone else. That comment, plus earlier ones about work I was doing, impressed upon me the value of doing your best work, no matter what the job. And an old Danny Boy apple box label is still a valued possession. I offer special condolences to Reba whom I recently met, and to Mac and Cass whom I remember from my years teaching at Wenatchee High.

Sincerely, Doug McComas

Doug McComas - October 30, 2014 at 02:13 PM

AJ

“ I am a local musician and met Dan while I was playing.. He would dance but he was not to good at it .As the months passed, he got to be AWESOME. It was fun to watch. I think he treated dancing like his life. Some times we are not great at everything, but you have to try and see what happens. He helped be lots. Thanks Dan G.. You were not a Man that was hard to care about.I will miss ya.. Art Litscher jr.



Artie Litscher Jr - October 30, 2014 at 12:00 PM

GG

“ It was a tremendous privilege to meet and learn from this remarkable man. The last time I saw him we had the opportunity to talk for an hour just a few weeks ago. I won't forget the wisdom he left with me, and the encouragement to think differently than everyone else is thinking. He also shared this adamantly: "The best investment a man can ever make is in a full memory bank." That will stay with me for years to come.

Greg Grillo - October 29, 2014 at 11:55 PM

DC

“ Danny was a great man, and always supported and beleaved in me. Could never thank him enough for all he did for me and my family. You will be missed Danny Gebbers.
Doug Chantry

Doug Chantry - October 29, 2014 at 07:33 AM

KD

“ Deepest sympathy to the Gebber's families upon the loss of your father & grandfather. This obituary was a great tribute to Danny who was quite a legend, but also a man with a big heart. Back when I owned my store "Young at Heart" in Brewster, he made sure that all his employee's children had a nice new outfit to wear for Christmas under the tree! We always appreciated the long list of children's names, ages & sizes and did our best to find the perfect gifts and would have them wrapped & ready for him to pick up...or usually one of the girls! The Gebbers' family kept that store in business for nearly 8 years and their kindness was very much appreciated. R.I.P. Danny Gebbers, your family will continue to carry out your legacy.

Karen Denton - October 28, 2014 at 09:45 PM

SL

“ One thing I remember about Danny Gebbers was he never missed a sporting event, if he could help it. I remember his teaching me the proper stance for a batter; it was during a Pony League game at the old diamond. Great memories!

Steve Long - October 28, 2014 at 07:18 PM



“ Good man! Loved his stories.

Georgetta Lisenbey - October 28, 2014 at 06:57 PM

BH

“ Deepest Sympathies upon the loss of Dan Gebbers....he was definitely one of a kind! His vision for this area was exceptional. May God Bless each & everyone of you upon this sad loss....keep your memories close!

Bonnie House - October 28, 2014 at 05:13 PM

JM

“ Danny was always so great to the McMillans when we were in Brewster. What a privilege to be a part of the "Gebbers of Brewster". We thank you for your friendship and kindness. Our memories are many and your children and grandchildren are a joy to this world. We cherish each one of them. Thank you for all you have done for Brewster and this world.
Rest in Peace Danny.

Jack and Sharon McMillan - October 28, 2014 at 04:54 PM

MW

“ My Grandpa was one of a kind. Thanks for looking out for me and for giving my kids a Big House sized yard to play on. I love you Grandpa. See you in Heaven.

Melanie Wyss - October 28, 2014 at 02:58 PM

DS

“ I have know Danny and his family my entire life. My mother was a classmate of Danny's and also shared the same birth date with him. She used to say that they were Twins. Danny always got a kick out of that. One day I was talking with Danny and told him the trouble I was having getting my water rights straightened out, and that I guess if the ecology dept. ever came with questions, I would tell them Danny was my Dad and they should go see him. He said " That'll be fine they won't know the difference.
Danny was a kind man, and will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

Diane Shaw

Diane Shaw - October 28, 2014 at 02:08 PM

RG

“ My grandpa Danny taught me more than he will ever know. He taught me how to live life but to be smart. I knew my grandpa loved me when he came home from a trip to Mexico and told me he almost had me married off... "but the guy wouldn't leave his kid...we almost got you one baby." A girl couldn't ask for a better grandpa. I love you grandpa and will miss you forever.

Reba Guzman - October 28, 2014 at 01:36 PM

MG

Hahahaha... One of a kind. Such a great man, he will be missed!

Marlene Guzman - October 28, 2014 at 09:23 PM



Adam Thomason

My brother Alex and I were being stupid with my first truck when I turned 16. We were racing through one of his orchards and ran into one of the apple trees, badly damaging it. I had to go face him, and near tears, apologize. He stared at me for a good :30, and then slowly pulled out his wallet and asked me how much he owed me for taking care of that 'problem tree.' Great sense of humor. Huge dose of grace.... such a kind response. Then he never let me live it down. Great man.

Adam Thomason - October 29, 2014 at 02:30 PM

DL

I just learned of this passing today, months after the death. I simply pay tribute to this man for my parents, especially my father, who cared for and appreciated the Gamble/Gebbers legacy. Danny coached me at first base when I was 9 or so. I admired his family's athletic feats, and admired their care for the land. Cass bought our place, and has been gracious to us when we take sentimental journey home, as have the Bosels. Anyway, I have memories of Danny and Martha all through my life. But it's my dad who knew them best. Here's appreciation through me, from him. Dan Lamberton, son of Harold and Bernice Lamberton

Daniel Lamberton - January 05, 2015 at 10:00 PM