

Thomas Payton

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HAMILTON, Mont. • Thomas Payton, 71, of Hamilton, Mont., passed away Friday, April 18, 2014, after a long battle with blood cancer.

He was born Jan. 26, 1943, in Wendell, Idaho. Tom grew up in Jerome, Idaho, and graduated from Jerome High School in 1961. He worked with his father at Volco Builders during those years. After attending the University of Idaho for two years, he put his schooling on hold to earn money for tuition. Tom enlisted into the U.S. Army in 1966. After a parachute chord caused hearing damage, he became a corpsman which included a short stint in Okinawa, Japan, providing support for the war.

After his honorable discharge, Tom moved to the greater Seattle area where he thrived professionally, building custom homes with his partner and longtime friend, Robert Casey. Tom had a special gift for organizing and conceptualizing the final product.

Tom married Maureen Kelly and together they had two sons, Ryan and Troy Payton, and adopted a third son, Clay Payton.

Moving to Hamilton, Mont., as well as owning and running the Best Western was a dream come true. After fully retiring, Tom was the happiest visiting with his friends at the Coffee Club, Rotary and traveling all over the United States and abroad. He spent a lifetime hunting and fishing with friends and family.

Tom was preceded in death by his parents, Cedar and Mary Payton. He is survived by three sons, Ryan Payton, Troy Payton and wife Corina, and Clay Payton; two granddaughters, Shelby and Cayci Payton; two brothers, Richard Payton and wife JoAnn and Walley Payton and wife Cindy; and sister, Maryann and husband Ike.

A service will be held at 2 p.m. Thursday, April 24, at the Daly-Leach Chapel with a reception following in the funeral home's community room. The family suggests that memorials be made in Tom's name to the Linda Massa Youth Home, 196 Providence Way, Hamilton, MT 59840. Condolences may be left for the family at www.dalyleachchapel.com.