

LUTHER GERALD JERSTAD

1936-1998

Lute Jerstad possessed a magical quality born of the mountains that affected all those around him. He was a good friend of my father's and, as a young boy in Washington, D.C., I remember getting excited when hearing that Lute would be coming to visit. Lute and my father would stay up late drinking, laughing, and telling stories about far-off places that captivated a young boy's imagination. Lute's tremendous laugh and presence filled a room. It's hard to imagine that a persona as powerful as Lute's won't be joining us for another round.

Lute was born in Minnesota in 1936 on his parent's farm: weighing only slightly more than three pounds, he was incubated in a shoe box and fed with an eye dropper. At 12, Lute and his family moved to Gig Harbor, Washington, where he attended high school and was introduced to the mountains of the Northwest. An exceptional athlete, Lute lettered in football, basketball, and baseball at Peninsula High School. Lute attended Pacific Lutheran University where he played basketball, making two trips to the NAIA tournament in Kansas City. He was voted the Inspirational Award his senior year.

During high school and college, Lute spent a great deal of time climbing throughout the Northwest. He climbed most of the major peaks in the Cascades. Lute began guiding on Mt. Rainier during the summers, logging more than 40 ascents of the mountain. Lute's climbing travels then took him to the top of Mt. McKinley. Norman Dyhrenfurth, the expedition leader of the 1963 American Everest Expedition, was impressed with Lute's climbing resume and invited him to join the team. He was only 26 years old.

On May 22, 1963, Lute and his climbing partner, Barry Bishop, stood on the summit of Everest as members of the first American team on the mountain. Not only did Lute summit Everest, but he carried a motion picture camera to the roof of the world and recorded the first motion pictures from the summit of that mountain. Even more remarkable, Lute and Barry joined Tom Hornbien and Willie Unsold after their successful ascent of the West Ridge that afternoon, and the four descended to the South Col together. They did not make it to Lute and Barry's high camp and were forced to spend the night out at 28,000 feet before reaching the safety of camp the next morning. This bivouac was an extraordinary feat, but the public had no real awareness of its significance.

Following his success on Everest, Lute obtained a master's degree from Washington State University, and a doctorate from the University of Oregon. He taught at Franklin Pierce High School in Tacoma, Washington, Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon, and The University of Oregon in Eugene, Oregon. He started Lute Jerstad Adventures in Oregon, and offered river rafting, mountaineering and outdoor experiences in the United States and Asia. One of his greatest joys was teaching and leading people to reach heights of success they would not have thought possible. He introduced deaf children, blind adults, the mentally retarded, and the physically disabled to the rigors of outdoor adventure.

Lute's love of the Himalaya and his desire to explore saw his return in later years to champion environmental causes. He worked with various business partners in India and Nepal to conserve wildlife parks and forests so that endangered species might survive, and at the same time provided a once-in-a-lifetime experience for those visitors who traveled with him.

Impressive as Lute's accomplishments are, it was his personality that made the real mark in the world. He was opinionated, outspoken, and as politically incorrect as they come. He made no apologies for his beliefs or actions; it was the world according to Lute. Lute loved his cigarettes, scotch, and the poems of Robert Service, and was never wanting for a candid opinion: he had a way of crashing through life with integrity that is not found easily in this day and

age. Gil Roberts, a member of the 1963 Everest expedition, tells of Lute, "He could occasionally be his own worst enemy, he got mad about stuff, but he was a loyal friend who always wondered what he could do for other people. He'd give you his down jacket or his last 50 bucks if he thought you were cold or broke."

Lute was extremely humble, never basking in his accomplishments on Everest, always downplaying them. He wrote to me after I climbed Everest in '94 with the following advice: "Accomplishing such a feat isn't much in and of itself, but in the long run it provides a mortal with a new, fresh and satisfying view of the world below. Now you erase the word can't from your vocabulary." It was with this attitude that Lute approached the world, accomplished so much, and touched so many people.

His final trip to Nepal was a trek to Everest Base Camp with his grandson and some close friends. They stopped to visit the chortans of Jake Breitenbach and Barry Bishop, fellow '63 Everest team members, on the ridge at Thangboche monastery. Lute allowed as to how he wouldn't mind ending up there by and by. Two days later, he dropped of a sudden coronary at Dugla. He is out on the ridge now. The view up valley to Everest is pretty special. If you get there, go out and share a beer with Lute, his friends, and the goraks.

BRENT BISHOP, *with input from STEW MORTON and GIL ROBERTS*

NED GILLETTE

1945-1998

"Ned left me and a lot of us with the courage, passion and imagination to push on, to go and live our dreams."

—Susie Patterson Gillette

Ned Gillette, 53, was killed by two bandits on August 5, 1998, in the Haramosh Valley of northern Pakistan in an apparent failed robbery attempt. He was at the end of a Himalayan trek with his wife, Susie Patterson, when two assailants blindly shot into their tent during the middle of the night, fatally wounding Ned. Susie, in serious condition, survived and was evacuated to Gilgit with the help of shepherds and police.

Ned lived an extraordinary and energetic life, remarkable for the variety of adventures he created, the skills he mastered to complete them and the colorful way he engaged a wide audience with accounts of his experiences. He defined his outlook in a piece called "The Meaning of Life," in which he said, "If life is to have any meaning, it's essential to carve out your own niche, to become special. Special things happen to special people. Climbing, skiing, and ocean voyages to remote corners of the world are often so gnarly and so scary that you wish you'd never left home. But eventually the sun shines again. You must be an optimist."

Ned grew up in Barre, Vermont. He began skiing at age five, and spent summers sailing New England's coastal waters. From Holderness School in New Hampshire, he went on to Dartmouth, where he was captain of the ski team. He was NCAA cross-country ski champion in 1967, the year he graduated, and became a member of the 1968 Olympic team. In 1970, he helped establish the cross country ski program at the Yosemite Mountaineering School under director Wayne Merry, which he ran for several winters. He then returned to Vermont to head the Trapp Family Lodge's Ski Touring Center in Stowe.

His first expedition was a 1972 ski traverse of the Brooks Range in Alaska. Along with three teammates, he covered 300 miles of the proposed oil pipeline. He then began dreaming up his own adventures, usually carried out with three companions.