

John W. Betrozoff became an educator and state legislator

John W. Betrozoff was born in Raymond on January 22, 1935 at the Riverview Clinic. There were 11 children in the family, eight of whom are still living and all are RHS graduates.

He grew up in Riverdale and attended Riverdale Elementary, Raymond Jr. High School and Raymond High School, graduating in 1953 with 47 other graduates. He lived in Raymond until age 20.

John remembers, "At Riverdale Elementary (new then, now gone), my first and second grade teacher was Miss Gard, who was a real task-master. She made us learn our basics and would not accept second-rate work. My basic reading, arithmetic, spelling, writing skills have been a real plus during my life.

He also remembers the 1949 earthquake at the old Raymond Junior High School building. "Our homeroom teacher grabbed her purse during the quake and ran out the door," said John, "leaving us students wondering what to do. Fortunately the old building just cracked in numerous places, but did not fall down."

In high school, John participated in football, basketball, and baseball, the basketball team went undefeated 20-0 in 1951-52 and ended the season 21-1, being upset by Vancouver in the district tournament. The 1952-53 basketball team went 18-3 losing twice to Elma and their 7'1" center and to Hoquiam in the district tournament. He recalls that Vern Kohout was the 1953 baseball coach. Since John and Vern were both left-handed, Vern gave John his baseball glove, which John still has. "It was certainly a tremendous gift to me at the time and I will always appreciate his kindness and concern," said John.

When asked about his favorite teachers John recalls, "Semon Anderson was my social studies and print shop teacher. He was probably the nicest, most helpful, most concerned teacher I ever had. Andy also attended about every sporting there was and was always a cheerful person. Even when he got mad at us, he was nice about it!"

He also said that Bob Svendsen, the high school basketball coach, was the first coach he could recall that really knew something about basketball and coaching it.

John also said, "Warren Flanagan was a refreshing change as RHS principal. He replaced James Thrasher who administered RHS as if he were still a Marine drillmaster."

John worked from elementary days through high school and college. He delivered newspapers, was a J.C. Penney stock boy, a China Clipper kitchen helper and janitor, print shop trainee for the *Raymond Advertiser*, a gas station attendant for his uncle Walt Domin, picked blackberries and fox glove, peeled cascara bark, and washed dishes at a local café. He worked as a janitor while at Grays Harbor College and Western Washington University. He received a stipend for playing basketball from GHC and received pay at WWU for being the sports editor for the student newspaper. He received a Student Teaching grant from Western during his senior year. John said, "College would have been impossible without the jobs and the special financial help."

He continued, "I received the Kiwanis college scholarship. It enabled me to go to Grays Harbor College. Weyerhaeuser management also allowed me to work summers with the millwrights and some night shifts pulling lumber off the chains. I am thankful to Fred Tregaskis for his Kiwanis support and Weyco managers for their help."

John married Sara Jo Belles of Omak, Wash., in 1960. They have no children.

John attended Grays Harbor College and Western Washington University, finishing in 1963 with a Masters in Education. He attended the University of Washington Graduate School for his school administrator credential.

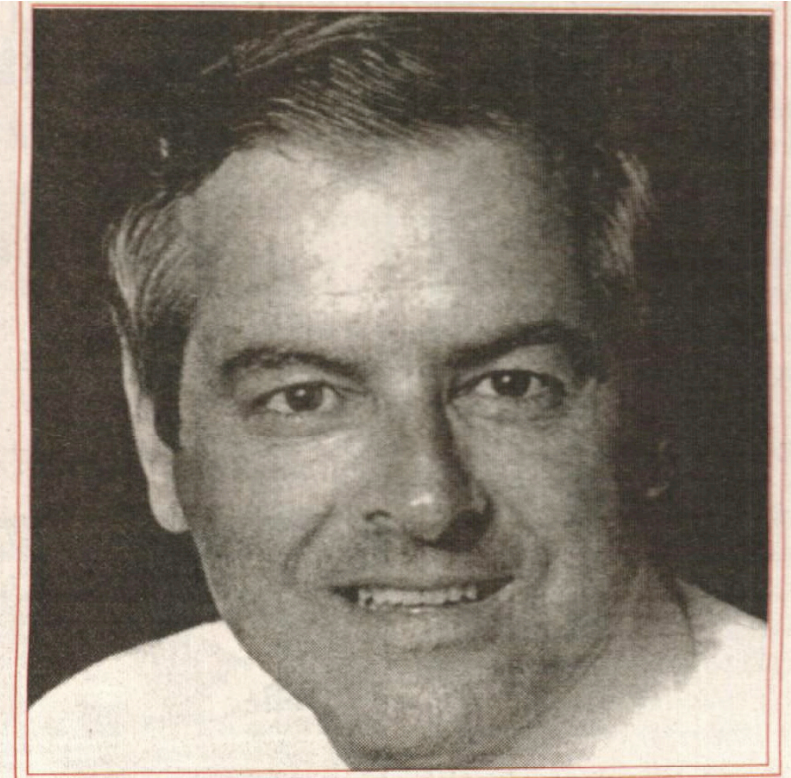
He worked for the Bellevue School District as elementary and junior high teacher, elementary principal and grants manager. From 1960 to 1962 he worked in Germany in U.S. Army schools as an elementary teacher. He worked for the Washington State House of Representatives from 1979 to 1982 and was then elected a State Representative five times, serving from 1983 to 1992. He did not run for re-election in 1992, as he is a supporter of term limitations.

He began investing in real estate in 1961 and was a partner with Jack Fykerud (RHS, Class of 1954) in rental properties from 1979 until Jack's untimely death.

John has traveled to most states, Europe, Mexico, Canada, North Africa, South Bend, Menlo, and Bay Center. He has returned to Raymond yearly to visit four brothers (Norm, Stanley, Walt, Jr.) relatives and friends.

After his wife's retirement in 1993, the couple has spent long and longer portions of fall and winter in Arizona.

When asked what he would say to the senior class at RHS today, John replied, "If you are a good student at RHS, you can be successful in college or technical school or anything else you choose to do. The same attitude and motivation that made you a good student at RHS will also prevail over the college years and beyond. Growing and getting involved in a small rural community is a big plus that cannot be matched by suburban-urban students."



Raymond Alumnus
John W. Betrozoff, 1953