



WALTER CASH

- **Decorated WW II Veteran, Insurance Agent, and Missoula Mayor**
- **Born.** August 22, 1921 near Molt, Montana to Bertha Mae and James Bascom Cash.
- **Married.** In 1944, he married Marian Van Winkle of Bridger, Montana. They had two children: Karen and James.
- **Died.** April 22, 2010 in Missoula, Montana.
- **Education.** After graduating from Huntley Project High School in Worden, Montana, Walter joined the Civilian Conservation Corps and worked at the Savanac Nursery near Haugan, Montana. He was attending Kinman

Business School in Spokane, Washington when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor.

- After the attack on Pearl Harbor, Walter joined the U.S. Army. He went to officer candidate school and served in the Army 89th Infantry Division as a second lieutenant. Walter's unit received the Distinguished Unit Citation for helping stop the largest bonzi charge of the Pacific on Saipan Island. His unit was honored for bravery and heroism during combat with only ten percent of the unit returning from the war. For this action he received the Purple Heart and the Combat Infantry Badge. He was honorably discharged as a first lieutenant.
- Soon after marrying, Walter went back to college. He attended the Montana School of Mines and later the University of Montana. He graduated with a Bachelor Degree in business administration with a specialty in banking, finance, and found his niche selling life insurance. His years selling life insurance were his way of helping families not to have to experience the struggle to make ends meet that he was forced to live while growing up during the Great Depression era.
- Upon graduating, Walter worked for Western Montana National Bank, Clute Polleys Lumber Co., and many years as an insurance agent for Occidental Life.
- **1959-1961.** Elected as Missoula's 37th Mayor. He served 24 months. Walter's greatest accomplishments as Mayor was working toward the establishment of Missoula's sewage treatment facility, laying the groundwork for building the Higgins Avenue Bridge downtown, and planning the revitalization of the downtown business district along with extensive street renovations. He was involved in the early stages of finding a new City Hall location. He lost his bid for re-election and was never successful in being elected to other public offices. His volunteerism in community organizations, however, proved to be invaluable.
- Walter was the first elected mayor after Missoula voters opted to return to the form of governance that includes a mayor and city council opposed to a city manager and city commission. When asked, Walter would state this was the best job he'd ever had.
- Walter was considered a stoic and active Republican. He was very hardworking and the considered the kind of man who put God, country and family first. Walter credited his war experience for developing a deep belief that his life was spared for a reason, he felt a real need to do something with his life to honor those who could not. That belief drove him to become a true public servant, active in community services of a wide variety. He served with the American Legion in many local and district

positions along with the local Chamber of Commerce and Reserve Officers Association. He was a charter member of the Missoula Exchange Club, lifetime member of the Jaycees, and a 32nd degree Mason and member of the Scottish Rite.

- Walter loved the outdoors and enjoyed hunting, camping, and fishing. His favorite fishing hole was just west of Lolo on Howard Creek. The stream was small enough the children wouldn't fall in and drown, but big enough to catch fish. It was secluded then and had a small trail nearby where the family could hike. This was a regular weekend getaway and provided hours of entertainment for the entire family. He was a devoted father, very active in his children's activities from scouting activities, DeMolay, Job's Daughters and civic education.
- Dinners at home were a mandatory affair where the conversations focused on current events. Walter felt it was important for his family to be informed citizens and know what was going on in their community. The family unit was his ultimate focal point in life.
- Walter Cash may not have been as diplomatic as public perception wished, but he was friendly and personable. He always greeted folks with a firm handshake and a saying, 'Have a handful'. This saying became his signature greeting to friends and strangers alike.
- Walter was an avid walker, liked striking up conversations with kids and young folks and was especially generous later in life, often giving to those less fortunate.