



George in Klamath Falls, 1977.



**DONORS:**

Bruce and Evelyn Haak, Ben Elliott, Karen and Larry Cotrell, Ronald S. Kearney, Oregon Falconers' Association

*George Peden, M.D.  
Doctor, Falconer and Friend*

By Bruce Haak

George Peden (1938 to 1991) was born and raised in Redmond, Oregon, and developed a keen interest in birds of prey at a young age. As a young man, he corresponded with Col. Luff Meredith, the founding father of American falconry, and tested his skills with kestrels. Fortunately for George, his uncle Ralph Elliott lived near Smith Rocks where George's meanderings among the trees and high cliffs brought him first-hand experience with many species of nesting raptors, including the local prairie falcons.

George was a serious student and did not keep hawks while attending Oregon State University (OSU) in the 1950s. However, one of his classmates had captured a peregrine and was hunting ducks in the Corvallis area. Occasionally, George joined him in the field. Upon completing his Bachelor's degree, and a 4-year tour of duty as a Naval officer, he studied at the Oregon Health Sciences University to become a physician. After completing his formal education, he worked in northern California. In 1974, he returned to Klamath Falls, OR with his wife Martha, where his interest in falconry was rekindled. At the time, his attention turned to prairie falcons as well as captive breeding. He would eventually obtain peregrines for breeding stock and produce Peales falcons, only the second person after Larry Schramm to do so in the state. George also produced the first hybrid falcon in Oregon by inseminating my 9-year old passage female prairie falcon "Kudu" with peregrine semen. The sole offspring of this breeding was a tiercel, called "Mutt," flown for many seasons by Randy Carnahan.

I spent a lot of time at George and Martha's home in Klamath Falls while studying prairie falcons in Tule Lake, CA for my Master's degree at OSU. Later on, we would hawk ducks along the farmed verges of Klamath Lake, hawk partridge in Idaho, and exchange peregrines for breeding. As a physician, he worked harder and slept less than anyone I know. Our dinners were frequently interrupted so he could deliver a baby in the nearby hospital. Upon his return home, he could pick up the topic of the conversation without skipping a beat. A healer, an outdoor enthusiast, and a rabid reader, he seemed to be interested in, and know something pertinent about, almost everything. He was blessed with a truly incredible mind. In his role as a small-town doctor, he brought many of his neighbors into the world, and also watched a number of them leave. But through it all, he seemed willing to nurture the soul of anyone in need.

**He'd told me more than once that he wanted to die with his falcon in the air. It was to be a prophetic statement in that the tiercel peregrine I gave him in 1991 was the last creature to see him in this world. George was a large man with an even larger heart, which was his eventual undoing. The passing of friends like George leaves a void that, sadly, can never be filled.**

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