



# Morrison Messenger

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## REMEMBERING ROLF PAUL

July 31, 1937—January 4, 2002

*A Special Edition of the Morrison Messenger*

Rolf Paul died January 4th at his home on Red Rocks Vista Lane after a brief illness, surrounded by his family. Rolf and his wife Virginia have made their home here since 1969, raising two daughters, Krista and Erika, and participating in Morrison's political and business life. Rolf retired, closing his home-based business, in October 2000, after leaving the Town Board in April 2000. Since then, he had been busy remodeling his shop into an art studio and taking care of his granddaughter, Vivian. A second granddaughter, Caroline, arrived in November, and Rolf had the opportunity to get to know her a bit, before he was diagnosed with cancer in late November.

As Mayor and throughout his 26 years of service on the Town Board of Trustees, Rolf Paul was outspoken, colorful, and often controversial. He was also consistently dedicated to Morrison's interests and worked hard to make the town a better place than it was when he took office. Although some of his dreams have not been realized or sustained, the Morrison we know now carries the stamp of Rolf Paul's leadership for the last quarter of a century. Without him, it's questionable whether the financially troubled town of the 1970s would have survived. Because some current citizens may be unaware of the many great things he accomplished for the Morrison community, we wanted to present stories gathered from a few of the many folks who cared about Rolf and who appreciate his contributions to the small town he loved at first sight. *Thank you all for sharing your memories and stories!*

In memory of Rolf's love for classical music and his longtime support of local cultural organizations, his family suggests contributions in his name be made to

**Jefferson Symphony Association Endowment Fund**  
P.O. Box 546, Golden, CO 80402



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## IN APPRECIATION...

*The Rolf Paul family wishes to extend its gratitude to all the citizens of Morrison who have expressed their sorrow and regards during our time of grief. Please know how much all of your thoughtfulness and caring has been appreciated. Special thanks to all who came to the memorial service, sent cards, made phone calls, provided food, and said prayers.*

*Extra special thanks to Reza and Gary of Tony Rigatoni's, who donated food, equipment, and their own time to help us with the reception. What great citizens of Morrison! Thanks also to the Town and the Morrison Police Department for anticipating and controlling traffic problems at the reception.*

*And last, but not least, heartfelt gratitude to all who sent and are sending donations in Rolf's name to the Jefferson Symphony Orchestra. The town and its citizens meant so much to Rolf, and we thank you for showing us in so many ways how much he meant to you.*

*Sincerely,  
Ginny Paul, Krista Nash, Erika Paul*

## TIDBITS AND TRIBUTES...

Buck Anderson, who was Town Treasurer from 1982 to 1984 while Rolf was Mayor, reports that he, Rolf, and Alberta Kalavity (Town Clerk) practically lived together for those two years. He and Rolf, being self-employed, put in many hours for the Town. He estimates his effort as about equal to a 40-hour week (at a minimum!), but figures Rolf and Alberta put in at least 60 hours each most weeks. Rolf sometimes managed this by sleeping next to his press, so he could keep up with his work and have time for Town business during the day.

"Rolf was the only man in politics who would vote the Town's interests instead of voting his OWN interests," Buck Anderson reports. "No one on the Board—even me!—had more integrity." Rolf's primary interest was in devising creative ways to raise funds to keep Morrison financially viable. Rolf was vigilant in collecting sales taxes from businesses that hadn't paid in years. Buck also remembers that without Rolf's skillful negotiation, convincing Leo Bradley to sell land to the U.S. Postal Service (who planned to close the downtown facility), Morrison would no longer have a post office.

***"Rolf did a tremendous amount for this town. I didn't always agree with him, even had to walk out of a couple meetings, but he always had the Town's interests at heart."***

—Robin Smith, fellow Board member

—from the Rocky Mtn. News, January 16, 1983

**"We have between 460 and 483 people here in Morrison," he says. "Of those, 180 are water users. It is quite expensive for that few of us to absorb the escalating costs. It is not cheap being self-sufficient."**

**Paul and the council say it is important to make Morrison financially sound. "In the past, Morrison often was run more emotionally than business-like," he says. "But, in putting the house in order, we have been conscious that whatever we do, we do as neighbors. We have tried to be compassionate."**

One day in 1983 I visited Art Gore and found him unusually upset and despondent. I went to Rolf (he was then Mayor) and asked if we could do something to honor Art. Rolf put his blessing to the project and responded quickly by proclaiming "Art Gore Day" in Morrison. He backed it up by printing awesome proclamations, that included a seal, signature, and were impressive enough to post in all the business windows. Later, I went back and said: "Rolf, I need flags." He wrote me a check for \$300, saying "Don't tell anyone." We had about 3 dozen flags, all over town, and they were beautiful. We had a big banner from Coors across Stone St. that said 'Meet me in Morrison.'

A rock group, maybe Grateful Dead, was in town that weekend, and the banner and ALL the flags were stolen. I was heartbroken, but especially sad to tell Rolf. I went back to him, said "I'm sorry. They were all stolen." Rolf replied: "Are the holders still there?" When I told him yes, he said "Shirley, be thankful for that—count your blessings.."

He was still smiling over the incident when I left.

—Shirley Barnes, former Administrator of  
Pine Haven Nursing Home

## Rolf Paul—Doing good deeds quietly

- ◆ Moved to Morrison in 1969 and opened a business here in 1976
- ◆ Promoted and publicized the town, and worked in its best interests for more than 26 years
- ◆ Helped create a series of cultural and community events (1979-80), including Morrison's First Annual Antique Show, Pumpkinfest, Parade, Fine Art Show, and more!
- ◆ Member of Board of Trustees from 1974 to 2000 and Mayor from 1980 to 1984, attending as many as 650 regular meetings and dozens of special or committee meetings
- ◆ Laid the foundation for a financially stable town and a more vital business district, increased sales taxes
- ◆ Updated town's water system and added operational reservoir and storage tank
- ◆ Negotiated C-470 alignment with CDOT and Lakewood to prevent it coming through Morrison
- ◆ Personally paid Morrison's bill when Public Service threatened to cut off power to Town
- ◆ Personally roused downtown residents to evacuate during 1983 flood
- ◆ Was instrumental in bringing the Morrison Theatre Co. to Morrison in 1990
- ◆ Served on the Advisory Board for Morrison's Natural History and Heritage Museums and designed their logos
- ◆ For years, embossed logos on thousands of covers for Dinosaur Ridge Field Guides, on Cowboy Celebration invitations, on Morrison Theatre programs, and on Jefferson Symphony programs at no charge to those organizations
- ◆ Designed the clock tower at the Conoco Breakplace, as an alternative to the proposed ordinary (and very tall) Conoco sign.



Mayor Rolf Paul

Rolf was an immigrant, a pioneer, an artist, a civic leader. He was a complex man, whom I found engaging because he had a zest for life and a sprightly personality reflected in the sparkle of his eyes and the bounce of his steps. We talked on the phone, on the street, at the table about everything. On town matters he was always accessible and ready to clarify his position. We had some differences... [e.g., the Conoco gas station project], but it did not become a source of unease as so often happens between neighbors in a small town. We always knew where Rolf stood, and why. I would discover during our seven-year friendship that we shared important values and viewpoints.

Certainly, the "immigrant" part made us appreciate each other—we were both products of a traditional European upbringing and were children during World War II, with primordial feelings and experiences seared in our memories and our hearts. Rolf was a hard worker. He was forever grateful for having been "given a chance". Smitten by the American way, freedom of expression and of action, he was always aware of the extraordinary privilege he had of living

and working freely in our country. ... He felt it his duty to give back for what he had received, and met this need in civic activities in our little town of Morrison

Throughout his political life, Rolf understood the physical and economic realities of our town. He worked energetically on fulfilling its potential and promise. He made practical decisions to preserve Morrison as an independent entity. ... He unavoidably made adversaries, but I found that he never dwelt on the negative, and acknowledged an opponents' position without belittling it. It was not his nature to keep grudges. He was not a gossiper. He was discreet and modest about his accomplishments.

Finally, Rolf was an artist at heart. He had a great sensitivity to color, lines, and shapes. ... Last year he built himself a gazebo to observe the nature that so much enchanted him, the wild life, and the many moods of nature over the slope of his property. Rolf would meditate daily at his gazebo, visible from my own backyard—he would see and recognize me, and wave... my last image of Rolf.

—Pierre Dogan, neighbor and friend

## As others knew Rolf... the Stories

[When Rolf was Mayor,] people owed hundreds of dollars in water bills, and the records were so bad, we sometimes had to accept whatever people said they'd paid. A lot of people didn't like to pay. In those days, the only way to cut off sewer service was to dig up the line and literally cut it off. It was very expensive! During Rolf and Buck's tenure on the Board, they built up enough surplus to put in the water line on Canyon Vista and build the new water tank—and paid cash for both!

You'd have to hang on if you rode anywhere with Rolf! Once [1993] Buck [Anderson] and I went to Fort Collins with Rolf to get an award for the Town. But Rolf didn't allow enough time. So we drove up I-25 at about 90 mph, with Rolf saying "We'll be on time, you'll see." Sure enough, we were.

—Robin Smith, former Trustee



90 was slow for Rolf... He got MORE tickets between Fort Collins and Cheyenne (where his mother lives). I think he even got one in Morrison.

—Wayne Jacobson, fellow Board member



The night I was introduced to the Board of Trustees as Deputy Town Clerk of Morrison, Rolf was present along with Mayor Mary Poe and other trustees. I gave a brief speech about how I got to Morrison, and Rolf, being Rolf, abruptly said "Are we going to hear your whole life story, or what?" It was quite a first meeting that left a mark on me. Later, the Rolf I came to know and love showed his true colors, and we became great friends. He said to me as I left Morrison, "Anything you need at all, just call me."

—Sheri Atencio-Church, former Town Clerk



Rolf was the mayor when I first joined the Morrison Board. As a veteran of many formal meetings, I was taken aback by the sometimes apparently overbearing style of this slight, dynamic man. At one meeting, spying the single spectator in the back of the hall, Rolf rose to his feet, dramatically pointed at the man, and exclaimed "What the hell are you doing here?". Slightly in shock, I naively presented Rolf with a copy of Robert's Rules of Order at a later meeting. He laughed, saying he didn't need that, he just needed to get things done! The incident was byplay understood by the man in back, but misunderstood by me! Gradually I came to know that Rolf's brusque manner was a protective shell behind which stood a man who was small in stature but large in warmth and energy, who loved and worked all out for Morrison. It was my great privilege to know him.

—Dick Scott, fellow Board member

When Rolf was mayor, I wrote letters to him whenever something in town needed doing. He would tease me about "Not ANOTHER letter from Ken!" But things always got done; it was always worth writing.

—Ken Denham, Morrison resident



Shortly after I arrived, the Town needed to influence decisions being made to locate C-470. Someone needed to attend a meeting that involved Transportation Department officials and the City of Lakewood. Being relatively new, I was arguing with Rolf that he should represent the Town. He had the history, he knew the past actions, and he would have more status, being an elected official and a business owner in town. He argued that I should attend as the Town's Manager. Finally, he said, "Look, you always send the one who will bring back the best deal for the Town... You, you have the patience to endure the @#\$, and you will bring us back a deal. You go!"

—Carol O'Dowd, Town Manager, 1985-1988



One year they had a dunking tank at the Red Rocks Elementary school carnival—Rolf [by then ex-Mayor] took a turn to get soaked by the kids... As I recall, when Rolf got up there, a lot of adults got in line for a chance to take a shot too! He was a great sport about it.

—Wayne Jacobson, fellow Board member



In 1989 Matthew Diminno went to Rolf Paul with a proposition. He suggested that the Town Hall once again be used to house theatrical presentations. And thus, The Morrison Theatre was born.

Rolf was always a friend of the theatre. He donated his wonderful printing to us (we still use his announcement covers for special presentations), he attended many of our shows, and he was always willing to support our crazy endeavors at the Morrison Town Hall.

We all thank Rolf and Ginny for their support and love over the years. We will miss Rolf and will honor him this season with our best effort at bringing our gift of theatre to a town that was so very special to him...Morrison.

—Rick Bernstein

The Morrison Theatre Company



Rolf Paul mutter overheard at a Town Board meeting during a lengthy discussion on a non-weighty subject: "Are we trying to reinvent the egg?"

—Roger Poe

# AN ARTIST, IN SERVICE TO HIS COMMUNITY...

*Excerpts from Rolf Paul's life*

Shortly after marrying, dad dragged mom to Morrison—a tiny little wisp of a town—and bought a tiny little dump of a house overlooking Red Rocks. She thought he was crazy. He knew he wasn't. And he was right. There, they had two children, me and my sister, Erika. And practically every important event and time in our lives since has revolved around that setting on Red Rocks Vista Lane where Dad set up his family more than 30 years ago. He died in that house, at just 64 years of age, overlooking the sanctuary he created for us all.

When I was four years old or so, I remember Dad sitting down with me at the kitchen table telling me he was going to start his own company and become mayor of Morrison. I don't remember exactly what I said in response, but I think it was something like, "Yeah, right Dad!" Not surprisingly, he did both.

Rolf Paul Graphics became the preeminent foil-embossing and die-cutting shop in Colorado. He pioneered new methods of approaching problems. He did jobs no one else could or would tackle. He worked so hard to build the business and his reputation, often working 18-hour days, especially in the early years, all while rebuilding the little Morrison bungalow that was home to both the business and our family, hammering so many nails that his thumbs throbbed at the end of many a long day.

Many, many times, people encouraged him to expand the business; they all knew his local successes could be regional and national in scope. But he never did, insisting instead that he had all he needed and wanted with his small operation out of our house. "Bigger isn't always better," he said, and he never regretted that decision. Many of you knew Rolf through his company, and you I'm sure experienced his—let's just call it "direct"—way of handling situations. You knew where you stood with him, whether you liked it or not, and that straightforward, honest approach served him well in the decades he ran the company.

Those of you who knew him from his role in Morrison politics knew where you stood with him, too, like it or not. He served for 26 years as mayor and trustee of the town, and remained deeply, deeply committed to its well-being until the end. In fact, one of the last outings he had before his death was on Dec. 4 to the Morrison Town Hall to take part in the recent election. He held his head high despite being so ill and cast his final vote for the future of the town.



Rolf Paul, above, is a graphic designer and mayor of Morrison.

See us at 10111 10th St. CO

Roll's Graphic Arts, Inc.

*"Bigger isn't  
always better..."*

—Rolf Paul

Many of you would credit him for his laser focus on managing growth in town and in the surrounding areas, for shoring up the essential water resources, and for ensuring the town's fiscal health. ... Someone mourning his death recently commented that she had reviewed the minutes of the town since the early 1900s and that no one ever got things to happen in Morrison until Rolf took the helm, and isn't that the truth?

Morrison meant so very much to him, and he to it. The logo he designed for the town, old buildings in the shadow of Red Rocks, flies today on the flags through town and graces the signs pointing people in its direction. I hope that small symbol will remain a lasting emblem to the impact he made on the town he loved so much.

—from his eulogy,  
written by daughter Krista Nash



**"He was the best boss I ever had."**

—Shari Raymond, Rolf's employee for 10 years



## More Stories—and Quotes from Rolf Paul

Rolf Paul interrupted me once again. I said "Rolf! That was a comma... NOT a period!" Silence. Then he laughed. He never interrupted me again. Well... ALMOST never.

—Mary Poe, former Mayor, 1996-2000



I will miss those occasions when Rolf would stop by on his scooter, taking me away from my yard work, and we would discuss the problems of the world. Sometimes we'd agree, and sometimes we would not—and sometimes he would change my mind. But, most important, we always remained friends!

—Lila Horton, town resident and historian



Joyce Davis, who worked for Rolf for ten years, reports a softer side of Rolf that those who have seen him only in public roles might find surprising. She and Rolf "took turns taking in stray cats who appeared in the neighborhood," and she remembers Rolf taking afternoon cat naps, feet up on his office table, with a cat on his lap. They'd often take "wildlife breaks" during the workday, watching birds at the bird feeders in his backyard sanctuary, or feeding squirrels on his desk while his cat dozed nearby. If Rolf was on the phone when a new bird appeared, he'd grab his colored pencils or markers, always nearby at his desk, and make a color sketch so he could look the bird's name up later. "It was tough to meet Rolf's standards [at work]," she adds, but after the first five years, she got pretty good at picking up the mistakes before they were printed. When she found an error on a job, she'd send it back to Rolf, saying "if he can't find it, we'll go to print." And sometimes he couldn't. When Rolf closed his business in October 2000, Joyce moved on to another job. His parting words to her were "If you need anything, call me."



Rolf had several cats during the time I worked for him, which he lovingly cared for, stating that he thought he'd like to come back as a cat.

—Shari Raymond, former employee



Jim Jordan, then Mayor, was introducing me as a candidate to fill a vacancy on the Board, and I said a few words about serving on the Board. After my speech, Rolf asked "Who the hell was that guy?" I explained I'd lived across the street from Jim Jordan, in Rolf's neighborhood, for about six years. Of course, I knew who Rolf was!

—Carl Boynton, former Trustee



"In the nutshell, I think we've struck the right balance between residential and business development," said Rolf Paul, former Mayor and longtime member of the Morrison Town Board, "A lot of other places have problems."

—Canyon Courier, Feb 28, 1996

### Summer of Phish (August 1996)

"There's just a lot of people in town now," said Rolf Paul, who has spent 20 of his 29 years here as a town trustee and one-time mayor. "But we'd have the same problems if you put them all in tuxedos and starched white shirts. There's just not enough room. ... We'll get past this. This town is the best-kept secret, even to this day. That's why real estate is never on the market."

—reported in the Rocky Mountain News



When Mary Poe called me the day after Rolf died, my first thought was "What a loss to everyone—his family, friends, and especially his community." Rolf earned my respect during the years I was Morrison's Town Clerk. I often said that town residents had no idea how blessed they were to have such dedicated Trustees—this was especially true of Rolf, who served the community for decades. He had an incredible memory and thorough understanding of Morrison's water needs, including legal issues, operational problems, and even algebraic formulas that determined how much water the town could use each year. I remember thinking more than once that he was the smartest man I ever knew—this is saying a lot because I've known a lot of very smart men.

It is impossible to remember Rolf without thinking of his firebrand personality. He yelled at me every January when I came to the Town Board with my annual request for staff pay increases and additional holidays. He lectured that employees should be grateful for having jobs and commented that "Of course they work hard, that's why we pay them." Then he would vote to approve the raises as requested. ..

In August of 1996, the Phish came to Red Rocks, and downtown Morrison was taken over by young followers of the band, creating huge stresses on law enforcement, utilities, and everyone who lived and worked nearby. The media also descended on the town and began interviewing everyone. Besieged business owners practiced a lot of deep breathing exercises; Rolf spent a lot of time at Ginny's store that week. He called one day and reported that there were two people copulating on the side lawn. "Oh well," he said, "what are you going to do? They'll be gone soon." And they were.

—Sharon Blackstock, Town Clerk 1990-96