

# From ABC to Marshal

Jim Allyn, his family and Allyn's Building Center have generations of history within Klickitat County

By Brandy Myers

Jim Allyn has become a fixture of the local community, running Allyn's Building Center for more than 55 years and serving as grand marshal of this year's Klickitat

County Fair. Jim believes ABC may be the longest running family business in Goldendale. He says his two favorite things about the region help make it special.

"It's the people and the places," Jim says. Long before there was a county fair, the

Allyn family came west in 1852 on covered wagons, settling in a little white church near Vancouver and Salmon Creek. In 1860, Jim's great-grandfather James Henry Allyn took a position as a minister in Wasco, and by 1879 made it to Goldendale. James' homestead can be seen off of the No. 8 Road and Hactor Road by a grove of locust trees.

Jim's grandfather, Jess Allyn, was 13 years old when his father passed. Jess became known as a quality carpenter and built a number of Victorian homes, one of which is still lived in.

In 1948, Cecil and Frances Allyn, Jim's parents, established their appliance store in downtown Goldendale, in the location where The Hair Affair is currently located.

Jim grew up in the Goldendale area, before heading to high school in Portland, graduating in 1961. He attended Benson Polytechnic during the week and returned home on weekends to help out at the family business. While at Benson, Jim took pre-engineering classes.

During the summer of his senior year, he worked at the Eastside Café as the breakfast cook. His mother taught him to cook when he was in 4-H.

While at Eastside Café, the acting manager left and Jim was given opportunity to run the cafe. This was his first time managing solo, and he was a natural since he knew how to get there at 4 a.m. to take care of the log truck drivers. It was early on when Jim discovered the key to success—hard work.

In December 1961, Jim began school at Oregon Tech, but his time there was shortened when he was diagnosed with tuberculosis, which resulted in immediate leave. He expected to need surgery, but the day before the operation, his X-ray showed no disease and he was cleared.



**Jim Allyn and his family have been a fixture of the Klickitat County community for decades, running Allyn's Building Center.**  
PHOTOS COURTESY OF JIM ALLYN



In 1962, Jim applied and was accepted to the University of Washington, where he joined fellow Klickitat County resident Bonnie Beeks. Jim studied mining and engineering, graduating in 1968. From there, he went to Wyoming to work in the oil industry.

Meanwhile in Goldendale, Jim's dad, Cecil, partnered with his brother-in-law Richard Arp to begin Allyn's Building Center in 1969. After a couple years working in Wyoming, Jim returned home to join the family business. In 1971, Cecil and Richard added business partner Roger Telford. Cecil retired shortly after.

In 1972, Jim's friends Ken and Karen Shattuck set him up for a date with Patty Woodward. Within a year, Jim and Patty were married. They had their only child Bryce in 1974, before Patty was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis.

In 1980, Jim had the opportunity to buy Allyn's Building Center from Richard and Roger. The family business continues to thrive. Jim considers the crew at Allyn's Building Center as his family, and a few employees have worked there for 20 years or more. Jim says the people he works with and his customers are what makes him get up and go to work every day. He takes joy in being around his employees and customers, as well as hearing about their projects.

In recent years, Jim was forced to slow down due to COVID-19 and his battle with cancer.

One of Jim's favorite local events is Trunk-or-Treat, where he hands out books and candy to kids on Main Street in front of his parents' old appliance store. Jim has also been known to host crab feeds at the American Legion and fondly talks about his participation in the early years of the demolition derby. Jim and the entire ABC crew are avid supporters of youth activities and for have provided countless sponsorships and donations. It's small businesses like Allyn's Building Center that make a difference in our community. ■

**TOP: Jim and his wife, Patty. RIGHT: Jim says the staff at ABC is like family.**



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