

## ***News Release***

In *One Flaming Hour*, former Idaho State Senator Mike Blackbird has written of how his brother Jerry came out of a heroic military career bitter and depressed, and then found perspective and purpose in a renewed life of public service.

During the peak of the Vietnam War Jerry flew more than 1400 medivac helicopter missions. He sent home a searing set of letters describing the horrors of war, the failing leadership, and the politics surrounding exaggerated body counts. His heroics resulted in numerous medals and honors but masked a growing doubt about the war and its purpose.

Jerry emerged from the experience with anger for the politicians who sent young men to die. He returned to a nation that had turned against the war, even in places like his small home town Kellogg, Idaho.

Mike Blackbird minces no words and does not sugarcoat in the least his brother's struggle to regain perspective and purpose. He frankly discusses Jerry's short and disastrous marriage his heavy drinking---all his efforts to purge the pain. Jerry was clearly headed towards disaster in spite of his love for literature and his coping device of writing every day in a journal.

Jerry's epiphany of the path forward to sanity and salvation comes early on a frosty morning in Montana when he is trying to hitch-hike back to his work in a mine near Kellogg.

He opted to get involved in politics as a way of serving his community. He served on the Kellogg School Board, and then went after the area's State Senate seat. Upon winning in 1978, he immersed himself in the details and minutiae of the legislative process. As a lowly freshman, he won a significant battle over the scaling practices of the large timber companies. In solving problems and helping people Jerry began to find the elusive surcease from sorrow.

He was viewed by many as a rising new star for the Democrats and often referred to as another Cecil Andrus.

The promise was never fully realized. In what has to be an irony of all ironies, Jerry was killed in a helicopter crash while checking out a log sale area in north Idaho.

The book, published by Ridenbaugh Press of Carlton, Oregon, is being released in September, and retails for \$15.95. It can be ordered directly from the publisher at his [Ridenbaugh press/northwest web site \(ridenbaugh.com\)](http://ridenbaugh.com).

---