

Buffalo Bill Center of the West Mourns Loss of Former Chair Alan K. Simpson

CODY, WY, UNITED STATES, March 14, 2025

/EINPresswire.com/ -- The staff, Trustees and Advisors of the [Buffalo Bill Center of the West](#) are mourning the loss of Alan K. Simpson, 93, a former chairman of the Center's Board of Trustees, 56-year board member and ardent supporter of the institution.

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He ranks alongside William F. 'Buffalo Bill' Cody as someone who has embodied the spirit of the American West and the essence of the town of Cody.”

Rebecca West, Buffalo Bill Center of the West CEO and Executive Director

Simpson died today in Cody, surrounded by family and friends after struggling to recover from a broken hip in December. Family members said his recovery was hindered by complications from frostbite to his left foot approximately five years ago. As a result, Simpson's left leg was amputated below the knee as an unavoidable medical necessity.

“It's impossible to overstate the contributions Al Simpson made to the Center of the West, to the community of Cody and to Wyoming and the country,” said Rebecca West, the Center's CEO and Executive Director.

“Few people have ever done as much for the Center of the West. He ranks alongside William F. 'Buffalo Bill' Cody as someone who has embodied the spirit of the American West and the essence of the town of Cody,” she said.

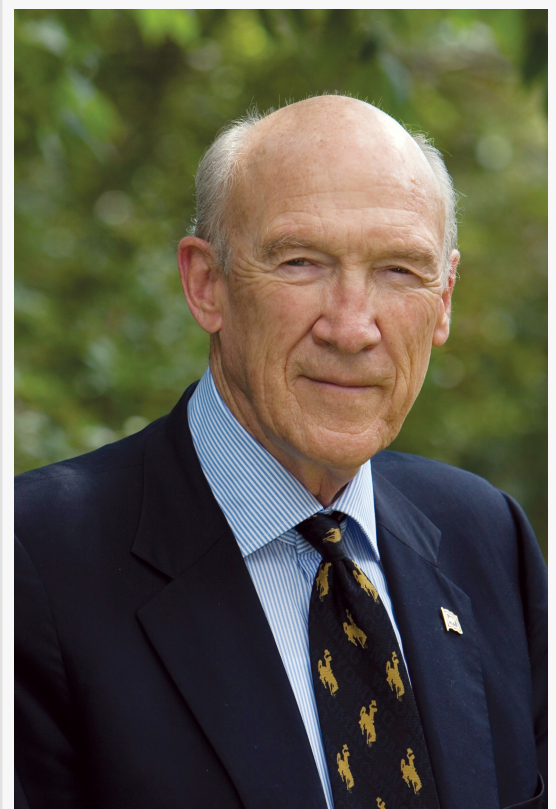
“Al Simpson's immeasurable devotion, loyalty, generosity and dedication have been the bedrock foundation we have all collaborated to build on for more than half a century, both here at the museum and in the wider Cody community,” West said. “We owe him a debt of gratitude that can never be repaid, and we will forever celebrate and benefit from the amazing and unparalleled legacy he leaves behind.”

Simpson joined the Center's Board of Trustees in 1968 and was instrumental in bringing the Winchester Collection to Cody and helping build the Center into the “Smithsonian of the West.” He served as Chairman from 1992–2011, and continued as a Trustee until 2024, when he reluctantly stepped down. He remained active in the affairs of his cherished museum.

He served as a U.S. senator for Wyoming from Jan. 1979–Jan. 1997, including as Senate Majority Whip from 1985–1987. Before that, Simpson represented Cody in the Wyoming House of Representatives from Jan. 1965–Jan. 1977. Beloved by colleagues and constituents for his plain-spoken candor, irrepressible sense of humor and ability to forge bipartisan alliances, Simpson remained active in civic life after leaving the Senate.

He served as co-chair in 2010 on President Obama’s bipartisan National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, along with Erskine Bowles, who was previously head of the Small Business Administration and served as President Clinton’s chief of staff. The two remained friends, and Bowles visited Simpson in Cody earlier this year.

In 2022, Simpson was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Biden. He advocated for campaign finance reform, comprehensive immigration reform, civic discourse and national debt reduction, as well as numerous local and national charitable causes.



Alan K. Simpson

“He was an uncommonly generous man,” said Pete Simpson, 94, Al Simpson’s older brother. “And I mean generous in an absolutely unconditional way. Giving of his time, giving of his energy—and he did it in politics and he did it in the family, forever.”

The elder Simpson said he could see leadership traits in his younger brother as far back as their grade school days and admired his self-assurance in winning a Senate seat.

“I thought, ‘Where did he get that confidence?’ But in the long run, I really wasn’t surprised,” he said.

“What I really admired was his independence of spirit,” Pete Simpson said. “Nothing put him in a position where he’d have to simply give up a principle or be less than who he was going to be.”

“He’s the most valuable, closest friend I’ve ever had, in the sense of being a source of inspiration, support, encouragement and love,” he said. “We were both lucky and blessed. Both of us.”

“He was gifted in crossing party lines and building bipartisan consensus,” said Colin Simpson, one of Alan and Ann Simpson’s three adult children, who all reside in Cody. “He would relate to legislative colleagues in a manner that allowed them to feel valued and listened to without being taken advantage of.”

At the same time, Simpson “was formidable and people knew it,” Colin Simpson said. “But he was also vulnerable because he spoke from the heart.”

“Dad and Pete have anchored the extended Simpson family for decades with the same love, humor, compassion and dedication their parents did before them. Dad was a mighty force and with Mom’s steady hand by his side we are so blessed and proud to have been along for the ride of a lifetime,” he said.

Ann Simpson said Al loved the Buffalo Bill Center of the West, and was dedicated to the museum, Cody, and his countless friends (some of whom he had not met yet), as well as colleagues in Wyoming and around the world. She expressed deep gratitude to all those who have reached out with love and concern for them both. “Cody is a giving back the love Al and I have shared with our wonderful town over the years. We’re so grateful for the opportunity to spend these last years in Al’s hometown of Cody—we had always planned to return here,” she said.

Al and Ann Simpson celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary with their children, extended family and several hundred friends in June 2024 by hosting an ice cream social for the community in Cody’s downtown City Park.

A memorial service will be held at a time and date to be determined at Christ Episcopal Church in Cody, with a reception to follow at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West. The family asks that in lieu of flowers, donations be made to the Center of the West, [Spirit Mountain Hospice House](#) and the [Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation](#).

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Courtesy photos are available online at the link below for editorial use only. Please credit Buffalo Bill Center of the West unless otherwise noted in the file title.

<https://tinyurl.com/zs92e3ch>

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