

MARY MEAD



One of Jackson's pre-eminent ranchers was "a woman born to the land that she knew every inch of -- every ditch, every bog, every dry patch, every likely place to look for an errant bunch of cows during spring gathering,"

"She was a diligent midwife to nearly 1,000 mother cows every spring, she kept many an all-night vigil with a cow in difficulty or bottle-feeding a shivering newborn as she talked to it and rubbed it with a blanket on her kitchen floor."

-- Read as a memorial written by her three grown children

Born on June 21, 1935, Mary Elizabeth Hansen was the only daughter of the Honorable Cliff and Martha Hansen of Jackson, Wyoming. She was raised on the Jackson Hole cattle ranch which her grandparents homesteaded in 1905. A third generation cattle rancher, she was a "hands-on" owner-operator. Upon returning to the ranch after a bid for Wyoming Governor in 1990, she said she was glad to be ranching once again. "I love what I do here," she said.

In 1957, she received her Bachelor of Arts degree in history from the University of Wyoming. Upon completing her education, she married Peter Mead and returned to Jackson. While Mary's father pursued a political career first in Cheyenne and then in Washington, she and Peter ran the family cattle ranch for more than 20 years and raised a family of three children. Following Mary and Pete's divorce and her father's retirement from politics, Mary continued to run the ranch with her parents, Cliff and Martha, and later with her son and daughter-in-law Brad and Kate Mead. She married Dick Steinhour in 1995.

Mary's many public roles included president of the Wyoming Business Alliance (formerly known as the Wyoming Heritage Society), member of the University of Wyoming Alumni Board, and serving on both the Wyoming Centennial Commission and the National Public Lands Advisory Council. She also served on the board of Questar Corporation of Salt Lake City, and was active in both the Wyoming Stock Growers Association and the Wyoming Tax Payers Association. Though she was involved in many statewide and national causes, her heart was never far from home. She served on the boards of numerous local organizations including St. John's Hospital and the Jackson State Bank.

It isn't titles, organizations, or accolades most people remember about Mary Mead. They remember her as a friend, a mentor, a mother, daughter, and wife. And certainly Mary didn't think of herself as an "important person." Rather, that's how she treated others. As one of her friends said after she died, "I always wished I could be the kind of person she apparently thought I was."

Mary's life was cut short by a horseback riding accident on her 61st birthday, June 21, 1996.



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