



## Freedus Monroe Colter

March 13, 1928 - October 22, 2016

How do we begin to describe this magnificent man we knew as “Freedus?” This journey began in Red Lake, New Mexico, where parents Robert and Rheba Colter anticipated the arrival of a third daughter. After all, they already had two daughters – Zelma and Lavelma – that they adored. In fact, Rheba had lovingly chosen the name “Freida” for this upcoming addition to the family. However, on March 13, 1928, weighing in at a whopping 13 lbs., this “not-so-little” guy greeted the world and surprised everyone! As a result, Rheba and Robert blessed him with the name Freedus Monroe Colter. Ultimately, the Colter family did have a third daughter, Veta Chloe, also known as Cody.

By the age of six, Freedus managed to make the local papers. The headline read, “CHILD BADLY INJURED BY HORSE’S KICK.” The article went on to say, “The six year old son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert J. Colter of Telar was kicked in the head by a horse Monday morning, suffering a bad face laceration and a fractured skull. The little fellow was rushed to the Baptist hospital in Clovis, where a Portales surgeon operated upon the skull, removing pieces of bone and dressing the wound. The little fellow was reported doing nicely Tuesday morning.”

Sisters Lavelma and Cody will attest to the fact that this “little” incident didn’t slow Freedus down a bit. They recall the time when Freedus used one of their pie tins to make stirrups for a tiny saddle he crafted. Boy, did he “catch heck”

for that! Years later, Cody recalled another time when Freedus chaperoned her to a 4-H High School Awards event, where Cody was to receive some awards. Once there, Freedus suggested that Cody pick up her awards and not stay for the ceremony. Unbeknownst to Cody, Freed had pre-arranged a date with a girl at a dance. She accommodated Freed's request. It would be 4:00am before they made their way back home, where their Mother was waiting to address the situation. Cody recalled getting a scolding from her Mother for getting home so late, but Freedus managed to escape a good talking to by Mom.

The Colter family continued to homestead in New Mexico, eventually amassing a 4-section ranch near Taiban, New Mexico. Who could begin to imagine that at one point, a cow named Mollie would forever change the course of Freed's life? Mollie, you see, was no ordinary cow – she had seven feet! Freed, perhaps seeking adventures far from the ranch, decided to take Mollie on the road and join a circus. He had a hunch that people might pay to see this very special cow with seven feet. He was right, and Freedus and Mollie ultimately found themselves in Michigan. Unfortunately, one night, the trailer that Freedus was staying in caught fire, and Freedus had escaped the fire, but remembered he had forgotten to grab his wallet. He rushed back in to the burning trailer to retrieve his wallet, and ultimately suffered 3rd degree burns over much of his body. In a critical state, he was admitted to the local hospital trauma and burn unit, where he met, and was cared for by nurse Elaine McDonald, who tended to the changing of his bandages for months. Years later, Freed would note that Elaine was the only nurse that didn't "turn up her nose" at the horrible smell of burned flesh. She treated him with respect and dignity during this horrific recovery period.

Ultimately, Freedus recovered from this ordeal, and ended up renting a room at a boarding house that Elaine's Grandmother owned. It was there that Evelyn Gilbert, Elaine's sister, first met Freedus. Upon seeing this 6' 3" handsome cowboy from New Mexico, she proclaimed, "I'm going to marry that man someday." And she did – they were married March 7th, 1956.

By that time, Freedus had already served in the Navy Reserve in World War II, and was drafted into the Army, where he served in the Korean War. While in Korea, he assumed the role of caregiver for a little Korean orphan known as “Little Beaver.” Little Beaver, or Kim, his given name, was the mascot in the battalion where Freedus served. Freed wrote letters to Evelyn from Korea, telling her all about this very special child. Realizing that they both adored Kim, Evelyn suggested, “Why don’t we adopt Kim?” It took two years, but their persistence paid off – Kim arrived in the USA in 1958, just three weeks after the birth of daughter Janice. Daughter Cynthia was born in 1961, and Lynda in 1966.

Freedus provided for his family, doing everything from welding, to hauling gravel, to selling water softeners, to installing and servicing bowling machines across the United States. In the early 1970’s, Freed began silver-smithing as a way to provide jewelry repair and custom silver work for their “Colter’s Western Arts and Jewelry” store. One family friend, Bob Kelly, named Freed “Funny Cloud” since he signed his jewelry pieces with “FC.” While money was tight, he and Evelyn still managed to provide a loving home for their kids, and memories that will forever be cherished.

Throughout Freedus’ journey in life, he met many people. His engaging smile was an open invitation to great conversation, and friendships that would last a lifetime. He had a John Wayne/Will Rogers persona. He was a man of his word, and he never met a person he didn’t like. As Dave Sonnen expressed after Freed’s passing, “He was a shining light.”

We can all find comfort in knowing that Freed is now with his beloved wife Evelyn, and no doubt enjoying a little fishing with his buddy Whitey. We envision him reminiscing with friends and family that he loved dearly who passed before him. We expect by now that he’s made even more friends. He would be deeply touched by the love and devotion of friends and family gathering to pay their respects.

Thank you Freedus Monroe Colter – Magnificent Son, Brother, Husband,

Father, Uncle, Grandfather, Great-Grandfather, and Friend for life. We will love you always and forever...

Freedus is preceded in death by parents Robert and Rheba Colter; sister Zelma Smith; brother-in-law Charles Parks; son Daniel McDonald; granddaughter Dusty Rose McDonald; grandson Thomas Bergh, and wife Evelyn . He is survived by sister Lavelma Parks; sister Veta Chloe (Cody) London; brother-in-law Ernest London (whom Freed enjoyed fishing with); children Kim Colter (Val Colter); Cynthia ColterWilson (George Wilson); and Lynda Colter-Bergh (Chris Bergh); along with nieces, nephews, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

Services will be held at Bohlender Funeral Home in Fort Collins, Colorado (121 W. Olive Street; Fort Collins, CO.) on Saturday, 29-OCT-2016 at 1:00pm. A Military Honors service will follow at Grandview Cemetery. A Celebration of Life reception will be held beginning at 4:00pm at the Embassy Suites Hotel (4705 Clydesdale Parkway; Loveland, CO). Refreshments and hors d'oeuvres will be served.

For those of you that have a piece of jewelry made by Freedus or purchased at Colter's, we welcome you to wear it to the service in his honor.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Fort Collins Pathways

Hospice:

Pathways

Memorial Donations

305 Carpenter Road

Fort Collins, CO 80525

T: 970.663.3500

<https://pathways-care.org/giving/memorial-donations-gifts/>

# Cemetery Details

## **Grandview Cemetery**

1900 W. Mountain Ave.  
Ft. Collins, CO 80521

# Tribute Wall



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Freedus Monroe Colter.*



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October 29, 2016 at 10:07 AM



“ *Our sincere sympathy to you on the loss of Freed--what a true gentleman; one who never met a stranger, who always had a smile and twinkle in his eye, and loved his family and the company of many friends. Our visits would usually result in a shopping trip to the store, which often included a history lesson or story of artisans and friends who crafted the items. We are honored to wear the jewelry that Freed crafted for us. The memory of Freed and Evelyn will remain in our hearts and in our home. What a pleasure to call the Colters friends. Bob Yockey and Linda Loing.*

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**Linda Loing** - October 28, 2016 at 03:26 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Freedus Monroe Colter.*



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October 26, 2016 at 10:17 AM

JW

“ We were so sorry to hear about Freed. He was such a happy person with always a smile. We will miss both him and your Mom. Our sympathy to all of you. Larry & Joan Willford.

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**Joan Willford** - October 26, 2016 at 09:36 AM

JP

“ We were so sorry to hear of the passing of Freed. He was my second dad for many years at the bowling center. He was one of the most real, genuine person I think that I have ever met. He made me feel like his best friend the first morning I met him with a big bear hug, which continued every morning he worked there. Who could forget our morning coffee with a gentle giant in a blue mechanic suit, not me I will never forget.

*Jeanne Peters*

*I also thought very highly of Freed. He was very personable and always had a smile on his face. He had a positive outlook on life that was contagious! He always made me feel like I was part of his 'adopted' family. He also had a very good sense of humor. He would always say to me 'poor Bob...' in reference to my wife Jeanne who can be a hand full at times. I too will always remember him as a very warm person.*

*Bob Peters*

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**Jeanne Peters** - October 26, 2016 at 08:31 AM

GW

“ As a student at CSU, I worked in the Game Room where Freed would come in one morning a week to get our parts and bowling machines running like clockwork. Always with a smile on his face, he could explain what was needed and show us how to fix it. I cant turn a screw the right way, but still loved to hear the stories and tall tales, and just being around "the boys". It was like a Rite of Passage as a college kid, learning how to work, share in life's problems, and feel a sense of belonging among good people.

*Rest well my friend. You made a difference in my life.*

*George Williams*

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**George Williams** - October 25, 2016 at 09:01 PM



“ 3 files added to the album Memories Album



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**Bohlender Funeral Chapel** - October 25, 2016 at 12:50 PM