



## Lee Frank McConnell

April 17, 1928 - March 23, 2025

Lee Frank McConnell was born in a house in Bellvue, CO on April 17, 1928, to parents Frank O. McConnell and Viola Ruth Dealy McConnell. Lee and his sister Edna (Tarlip) McConnell grew up on the family farm in LaPorte, CO.

He contracted polio at age 12 and spent many months in Denver Children's Hospital.

Undeterred, he lettered in track, football and basketball and participated in pep band at the Cache la Poudre School in LaPorte. His senior year, he was a school bus driver and drove children from the town of Stout (which is under what is now Horsetooth Reservoir) to Cache la Poudre school. He graduated in 1946 and that summer, he and Bobby Mitchell headed for Fairbanks, Alaska where they worked concrete for the summer. That fall, he enrolled at Colorado A & M where he majored in Agriculture Education. He received a Sears & Roebuck Scholarship to attend Colorado A & M.

On December 19, 1948, he married the sweetheart of his life, Mary R. Evenson.

He graduated from Colorado A & M in 1950 and took a job for a year as an agriculture teacher at Cache la Poudre High School.

After teaching for one year, Lee decided to go into the beef business with his father, Frank. It eventually transitioned into a dairy farm. He was in the dairy business for about 18 years and in 1971 decided to subdivide his farm for residential and multi-family housing in which now known as Cotton Willows Estates.

Lee was always civic minded and enjoyed his years belonging to the LaPorte Lions Club, he was the School Board President of the LaPorte School District and was also a director of the West Fort Collins Water District for many years.

He enjoyed growing alfalfa on their 160-acre farm and hiring high school boys to help harvest the hay three times a summer. He also harvested hay in Walden, CO on the Fuller Ranch, the Colter Ranch, and the Coyte Ranch taking his entire family for a "special summer vacation in North Park" with his three daughters riding their horses from sunup to sundown on the ranches.

In 1975 they built their dream home on the Poudre River where they lived and hosted many holiday dinners and get togethers for family and friends throughout the years.

They also spent many weekends at their getaway homes in Red Feather Lakes, CO on Lake Hiawatha and Estes Park, CO where he enjoyed fishing and playing golf.

Lee and Mary always looked forward to Cheyenne Frontier Days with their friends and enjoyed taking family members to the events. On Sundays, Lee and Mary enjoyed dining with family members for breakfast at the Blue Bird Cafe. You could find them most Saturday evenings back in the day, at the Safari Night Club in Fort Collins listening to the Bob Swerer Band displaying their ballroom dancing skills.

Lee also enjoyed antique cars and attending Colorado State University Men's and Women's Basketball and Volleyball games (of which they were season ticket holders for over thirty years).

Lee was preceded in death by his parents, his son Kenneth at age five, and great granddaughter, Emma Kate Bigge.

Lee is survived by his wife of 76 years, Mary R. Evenson McConnell.

Daughters: Kathleen Bigge (Doug), Kelly Richardson and Kerry McConnell.

Grandchildren Jason Bigge (Alisha), Shaun Richardson, Joshua Bigge (Julie), Brandy Kramer, Lindsay Barnes and Jena Swift (Evan).

Great-Grandchildren: Brittany Bigge Contreras (Matt), Mikayla Ihfe (Tyson), Austin Kreuzer, Jackson Bigge, Cooper Bigge, Allie Kreuzer, Natalie Barnes, Carli Bigge, Tanner Barnes, Skylar Swift, Remington Swift and Hudson Swift.

Great-Great-Grandchildren: Reed Ihfe, Lyla Contreras and Hudson Ihfe.

Also his sister Edna Tarlip (Dick), nephews Rick, Matt and Scott Tarlip, niece Susan Tarlip and special friends Murry and Linda McMurray and Barry Simmons.

Lee was the ultimate husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather and great-great-grandfather.

He will be sorely missed by all who knew him.

A Memorial Service will be held Thursday, April 3, 2025, at 10:30am at

Bohlender Funeral Chapel, 121 W. Olive St., Fort Collins, CO 80524. In lieu of flowers, contributions in Lee's memory can be made to directly to Children's Hospital Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, Aurora, or mailed to Bohlender Funeral Chapel.

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

APR 3. 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM (MT)

Bohlender Funeral Chapel  
121 W. Olive Street  
Fort Collins, CO 80524