



Ray Colard

October 3, 1921 - July 21, 2010

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Straight talk and straight fences

On the third of October, 1921 old Doc White was racing his Model T over a rough and rutted country road on his way from Lyons, Colorado to deliver the latest Colard baby. He hit a rock and knocked a front wheel off and as he watched it roll across the prairie he knew he would have to walk the remaining three miles to where the expectant mother awaited. When the old doctor finally stepped into the ranch house, he heard the sounds of a newborn. Ray Colard had already arrived. Ray and his nine brothers and sisters learned the value of grit and hard work as they and their parents, Art and Annie made a go of ranching and farming the arid rocky land northwest of Lyons, Colorado. Over the years Ray became a skilled cowhand and horseman. The seeds of the dream to one day own his own ranch were sown. In the summer of 1942 Ray was working as a wrangler on the Brenwood Dude Ranch in Estes Park. It was there he met Marjorie Leafgren, a pretty college girl who was also working there. When World War Two broke out Ray was not able to enlist to serve his country because his heart had been damaged by a bout of Rocky Mountain spotted fever he endured in his teens. Undeterred, Ray drove to the Mare Island Ship Yard near Vallejo, California and enrolled in and completed an intensive training program to become a licensed marine electrician to repair the battleships that sustained damage in the Pacific theater. It was

there in Northern California that Marjorie and Ray were married on September 4, 1943 and they welcomed the birth of their son Dennis on July 4, 1944. At the close of the war Ray, Marjorie and their young son, Denny traveled back to Colorado to search for the dream ranch. On Ray's birthday in 1945 they found and purchased their ranch in Stove Prairie. The place had no electricity or running water. It had been neglected and its fields and buildings were in disrepair. With little money, but a lot of heart and hard work Ray and Marjorie transformed the ranch. They built seven miles of fence, grew up a fine herd of Herefords and developed and restored the hay fields. Ray became famous for his straight fences and respected for his straight talk. Ray did not know a stranger. If someone showed up at his house, no matter who they were, they were going to get a cup of coffee and a bite to eat. In 1949 Ray got wind that they were soliciting bids to supply the timber for the construction of the Pole Hill Tunnel which was a link in a series of tunnel projects to transport water from Grand Lake to Horsetooth Reservoir. Ray only had a small sawmill but he did have a lot of confidence and plenty of standing timber, so he submitted his bid. A skeptical neighbor said "you will never get that contract; they'll give it to a big outfit." The little guy won the contract and Ray and his brother, Vern cut and delivered every piece of timber for the five mile long tunnel. Ray also had a hand in land development. He bought and sold hundreds of acres in the Stove Prairie and Buckhorn Mountain area and he and his family developed Spring Gulch Ranch Estates near Lyons, Colorado. Ray was a member of the Faith Evangelical Free Church and is survived by his wife of 67 years, Marjorie; his son, Dennis Colard; two grandchildren, Christopher Colard and Meagen Kalley; two great-grandchildren, John Henry Colard and Ewan Fletcher Kalley; and a brother, Donald Colard. Memorial contributions may be made to Mountain Valley Health Care Hospice and Faith Evangelical Free Church of Fort Collins in care of Bohlender Funeral Home 121 W. Olive Street Fort Collins, Colorado 80524. To honor Ray's request, a memorial service and reception will be held Saturday, August 7 at 10 a.m. on the Colard Ranch Stove Prairie, Colorado.

Tribute Wall

AD

“ *The Colard family gave us wonderful Deseran/Hill fishing excursions on their Stove Prairie ranch when our kids were little. We remember Ray fondly. Many loving thoughts to Marge and family.*

Ann Hill Deseran - July 30, 2010 at 12:00 AM

DI

“ *So sorry to hear of Ray's passing. I'll never forget him always calling me "George".*

Diana - July 27, 2010 at 12:00 AM

RB

“ *Proud to have known Ray, even if just a little bit. Someone you would like to set beside on a long train trip and love to have as a neighbor. Also a hell of a turkey shooter. Roy and Jo Barker*

roy and Jo barker - July 26, 2010 at 12:00 AM

MM

“ *Marge: It was our outstanding good fortune to meet you and Ray when we moved to Buckhorn Mountain in 1989. You noticed that these urbanites could use some help in their new adventure in mountain living. And you and Ray gave us unwavering help and support in so many, many ways in the ensuing years. We will be forever in your debt. Our love and prayers are with you and and your family. Mary and John*

Mary Pesko & John Mugler - July 25, 2010 at 12:00 AM

KK

“ *Ray was the epitome of a gentleman. His love for God was evident to all.*

katie kool - July 25, 2010 at 12:00 AM