

James Seely 1935—1992

James Leon Seely was born June 7, 1935, to Leon E. and Elsie May Seely at the Seely homestead at Saddle Butte, Harney County, Oregon. He died Dec. 10.

A service was held Monday, Dec. 14, in St. Andrew's Episcopal Church. The Rev. Gene Lottman officiated. Penny Catterson was organist and Mary Lemos sang "Amazing Grace" and "Jesus, Rose of Sharon."

Casket bearers were Frank Catterson, Donald Opie, Billy Quier, Keith McClain, Darrel Cochran, and Earl Carson. Honorary bearers were all his fellow classmates and friends.

Jim Retherford gave the eulogy at the service. A concluding service and vault interment were held in the Burns Cemetery with Dorman Miller singing "Red River Valley."

Mr. Seely grew up on the family ranch at Lawen and was very dedicated to his parents, family, and the land he loved. He attended elementary grades at Crane and Lawen and graduated from Lawen. He attended Crane Union High School all four years and graduated with the Class of 1953.

Classmates and friends can well remember how he liked to tease, and his determination when it came to proving a point that he thought was right. He would also defend anyone else with the same vigor if he believed they were right.

He loved all children—young and old. He made a very special effort if he discovered a youngster who was in need or troubled in any way. He shared his love, time, and talent to help them so they would have a chance to become a better and happier person.

If Mr. Seely disappeared and you wondered where he went, you would find him with the kids. And if the kids disappeared, you could find them wherever he was.

Mr. Seely was devoted to the ideals that all youngsters would have the opportunity to express their opinions, set their goals, and work to achieve them, and to be honest and believe in themselves. He financed, supported, and sponsored numerous students so that they would have that opportunity. He encouraged sports of all kinds for all ages. He was a Little League coach, a 4-H horse club leader, a member of the Lawen School Board of Directors, and he also served as a director on the board of the Western States' Junior Rodeo Association. He was a past member of the Burns Elks Lodge. He was devoted to and believed deeply in Crane Union High School.

Mr. Seely was known for his honesty and kindness and his concern for others. He always gave of himself with a smile and open heart, asking nothing in return. He was always there to lend a helping hand.

He grew up on a horse and became one of the best of a now vanishing breed of the old time cowboys. He can be remembered by many as being the first to be there to help when someone got into trouble with a rope or a horse. He was there first when any crisis arose.

He was very talented when it came to training a good horse. He could make a good all-round cow working horse, bridle horse, a roping horse, or a kid's horse. The kid's horse was always one of his best horses, with a little more "weenie" on them.

He also knew after a ride or two which horse would just be another good horse, or if it would make one of the better roping horses. He learned at an early age to use a hackamore and which horse was a natural for it. But one thing is certain, Mr. Seely was always close to his horse and his rope.

Mr. Seely is survived by his wife Melveta Seely of Lawen, son Leon (Buster) Seely of Ontario, daughters Cecilia Seely of Burns and Kelle Seely of Reno; mother Elsie Seely of La Grande; brother Jack Seely of Lapwai, Idaho; sisters Joanna Corson of Burns and Patricia Miller of La Grande; grandsons Jared Seely and Stephen Seely of Ontario, numerous nieces and nephews and other relatives and many friends.

Contributions in Mr. Seely's memory can be made to the Crane High School Scholarship Fund, in care of LaFollette's Chapel, P.O. Box 488, Burns, OR 97720.