

Wilfred Thomas Heal

Heal, Wilfred Thomas

October 8, 1936-January 30, 2005

As a gentle rain beat down at Victoria Hospice, Wilf died peacefully with a smile after a year's challenge with cancer. He was surrounded by loved ones. A native son of Victoria, he came from a line of ancestors who traced their arrival in Victoria back to 1850. He grew up in the Swan Lake area. His love of the outdoors came early. He spent as many free hours as possible exploring the lakeshore, first on foot then later on horseback. As a young man he would spend weeks adventuring throughout the Vancouver Island wilds on foot, snowshoe, horseback, and canoe, camping and fishing wherever he went. He was a member to the Vancouver Island Rangers and Victoria Fish and Game Club.

A working man in the construction industry, he apprenticed as a carpenter with Parfit Brothers. In 1965 he joined Benton and Overbury Ltd., opened a branch office for the company in Victoria and rose to be President before retiring in 1992. On "retirement" he started his own one-man company, Amodee Enterprises. He revelled in the simplicity of running his own one-man show and was thrilled to pick up the tools again.

But more than anything, he was a cowboy at heart. He loved everything about horses. There is a simple photo gallery he set up in his basement office. It shows dozens of pictures of him riding horses in the numerous countries he and Dianna travelled to. In each picture he is beaming, his cowboy hat raked up, one hand cocked confidently on his hip. He especially loved riding in the high country of the North Thompson plateau in the annual Kamloops cattle drive. Six months before he died he set out with quiet determination on the 14th annual Kamloops cattle drive. On the five-and-a-half

day trek he and three hundred other cowboys helped drive a large cattle herd from the staging area of the historic Hat Creek Ranch over the rangeland to Kamloops. It would be his last cattle drive. He loved every minute of it.

He is survived by his wife of 46 years, Dianna, who nursed him with a fierce love to his last day, his children Catherine (and husband Sheldon), Valerie (and husband Chris), and Stephen (and wife Monica); six adored grandchildren (Brett, Maddison, Emma, Isabella, Angus, and Zachary); his sisters, Judy, Gaye (and husband Bill Fluskey); numerous nieces and nephews, cousin Gloria Whitehead, mother-in-law (Agnes Steele), sister-in-law (Darlene Sophownow), and brother-in-laws (Bob Mills and Tom Steele). He is pre-deceased by his parents and brother Tim. He'll be missed by his fellow members of the Victoria Horseshoe Pitching Association, Joe the Bartenders Sportsmen League, and Kludak Trail Club.

The family thanks Drs. G. McLean and P. Nehra, and J. Papp, Community Care nurses, and all the Victoria Hospice staff for their tremendous care and support over the past year.

A Service of Remembrance will be held at McCall Bros. Floral Chapel, Vancouver & Johnson, on Thursday, February 3, 2005 at 3:00 pm followed by a reception in the Family Centre. In lieu of flowers, donations to the Mustard Seed Club would be greatly appreciated.