



Memorial Grove Ceremony
Honoring former Forest Service Employees
2025



Welcome to the 2025 Memorial Grove Honoree Ceremony!

The tradition of honoring Forest Service people who have passed away the previous year began here at Memorial Grove one-hundred and four years ago in 1921. The intent was to recognize Rocky Mountain Region employees who have served here in many different roles and have given so much of their passion, expertise, and commitment to “Caring for the Land and Serving the People”. This sustained tradition of recognizing those who have given so much over these many years would not be possible without the support of the people in the Rocky Mountain Region over the years, especially the folks on the Pikes Peak District, and those who have continued to care greatly for the Forest Service and its legacy even after retirement. We dedicate this special ceremony to all the families of each of the special people we recognize today. They symbolize the dedication, the professionalism, and outstanding public service that have made the Forest Service one of the best organizations in the country. This is who we are, and families are part of that “we”. Today we honor not only those who have left us in the last year but a few who we missed in previous years; however, in a sense we also recognize all those who have given so much over the last hundred plus years whose names are engraved on brass plates here.



America the Beautiful

O beautiful for spacious skies
For amber waves of grain
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

by Katharine Lee Bates

What is Memorial Grove?

The Memorial Grove was established in 1920 to honor Rocky Mountain Region soldiers killed in WW1. The next year a memorial ceremony was held on May 29, 1921, at the Grove and 30 trees were planted to recognize not only the five soldiers who died during World War I but also for other Forest Service employees who had died while officially with the Service. The original Grove had a memorial tree named, mapped and planted for each of the employees who had lost their lives.

The Grove is located on the grounds of the old Monument Tree Nursery, now the Monument Fire Center on the Pikes Peak District of the Pike and San Isabel National Forest. The Memorial Grove was established by using transplanted Englemann spruce, blue spruce and Douglas-fir trees from the Fremont Experimental Forest on nearby Pikes Peak.

Today's Memorial Grove continues to recognize and celebrate the careers, dedication and contributions of all those Rocky Mountain Region employees who have died and left their legacies for future generations to help manage the National Forests and Grasslands of the Rocky Mountain Region. The Memorial Grove ceremony also offers a special time and place to honor family members and friends of Forest Service employees for their critical support and personal sacrifices that contributed to the success of their loved and honored ones and the mission of the USDA-Forest Service.

After the Berry Fire in 1989, which partially burned a part of the Grove, it was decided a fitting monument with individual name plaques, attached annually, would be an appropriate replacement to honor past employees. One young tree continues to be added each year to the Grove to commemorate all honorees of the year, and to maintain a living memorial to those who personally served the Rocky Mountain Region and their country.

Since 1995, a memorial ceremony has been conducted on the first Saturday in May to highlight and reflect on those special employees who helped make the Rocky Mountain Region a special place to live, work and raise families. Substantial work has been done on the Memorial Grove site to make it unique setting for solitude and reflection.

The awareness of the Grove and its role in maintaining the special character and history of the Rocky Mountain Region continues to grow. Current and retired employees of the Region, the Pikes Peak Ranger District, and the Rocky Mountaineers sponsor the dedication ceremony, and deeply appreciate the support and financial contributions of employees, family and friends to maintain this very special setting and the memories it provides.

2025 Memorial Grove Ceremony Program

9:00-9:45 am —Time to walk through the Grove and informal greetings

Master of Ceremony — Gregg Goodland, Public Affairs Officer Rio Grande National Forest

Program begins at 10:00 am

Opening Song— <i>America The Beautiful</i>	Jane Leche, Forest Service retiree, (Katherine Lee Bates/Samuel A. Ward)
Rocky Mountain Region Welcome	Ryan Nehl, Forest Supervisor, Pike-San Isabel NF Cimarron-Comanche NG
Flag Ceremony	Air Academy HS JROTC with Scott Beach's bagpipes
Pledge of Allegiance	Gregg Goodland et al
Invocation	Kristen Michalski, Chaplain Colorado Springs Fire Dept.
Forest Service Memorial Grove Legacy	Frank Beum, retired Regional Forester
Honor Speaker	Tom Thompson, retired Deputy Chief National Forest System
Brass Plate Presentation	to Carl Bauer District Ranger, Pikes Peak RD (PPRD)
Riderless Horse	Ranger Bauer will lead horse around the Grove
Bag Pipes, <i>Amazing Grace</i> and <i>Comin' Home</i> — Scott Beach, bagpipes	
Song, <i>Bristlecone Pine</i> — Jane Leche (High Prestwood)	
Mounting of Engraved Brass Plates	Bill Nelson & Brent Botts, retired rangers, (PPRD)
Reading of Names	Tom Thompson (Bell Ring– Early Huie, PPRD Support)
	<i>Moment of Silence</i>
Closing and Invitation to Tree Planting and Lunch	Ranger Bauer, PPRD
Taps	Scott Beach, bagpipes and Honor Guard lowers the flag
Closing song, <i>Brand New Day</i>	Jane Leche (Unknown composer)
Tree Planting	Jake Ellsworth, PPRD and Rick Ellsworth, PPRD retiree

Lunch provided by Rocky Mountaineers.

— *Tri-Lakes Monument EMS available if help is needed* —

2024

Rudy Karl Anderson
Margery Gene Baldwin
Gary R. Blyth
Michael Patrick Burke
Sandy Campbell
Lewis Junior Compton
David James Condit
Bill Conklin
Dave Cook
Orval De Vere Elliott
Van Curtis Elsbernd
Marvin Wallace Hammer
James Richard Hillis
Jim Holloway

Kenneth Lee Kane
Robert Lee (Bob) Kapushion
Frank Lee Leonard, Jr.
John Murphy
Mary Louise Nelson
Linn Pettijohn
Eufrazio Cornelio (E.C.) Quintana
Steph Marie Martinez Rocco
John Linde Sundberg
Forrest Henry Tellock
Jean Adele Gelvin Thomas
Guy Malcolm Virkula
Gilbert (Gil) Walker
Wayne F. Wood, Sr.

*A society grows great when old men
plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in.*

2025 Memorial Grove Honoree Listing



Rudolph Karl (Rudy) Anderson



Rudolph Karl (Rudy) Anderson passed away on November 5, 2024. Rudy was born to Jack and Helen Anderson on May 19, 1931, in Whitefish, Montana. After graduating from Custer High School in 1949, he served two years in the Marines. While attending trade school in Springfield, South Dakota, where he studied auto body repair, he met the love of his life, Lois Stofferahn. They married on December 27, 1955, and had two children.

In 1959, Rudy went to work for the Forest Service on the Bear Mountain Ranger District. In 1970, Rudy was named Ranger of the Year for his work promoting Smokey Bear. He later became a fire investigation officer, organizing and overseeing the coordination between Fire Districts in five states, as well as overseeing operations at the Helitack base in Hill City. Rudy invested in his community of Custer serving on town boards and commissions and was an active member of the Custer Fire Department and Lion's Club. Rudy volunteered to help wherever there was a need. He loved hunting, woodworking, playing cards with friends, and exploring new areas in the Black Hills.

He is survived by his wife, Lois; children, Jacklyn (Roland) Bauer, and Edward (Shelly) Anderson; grandchildren, Eric, Aaryn, Jordyn, and Nikki; and great-grandchildren, Ollin and Myles.



Margery Gene Baldwin

Margery Gene Baldwin passed away on November 12, 2024. She was born to Oscar and Mabel Hanson Brendmoen on Sept. 12, 1927, in Webster, South Dakota.

Marge was raised on a farm during the 1930s and often rode a horse to school. After graduating from high school in Pierpont, South Dakota, she married Leeland Baldwin in November 1946. Together they had five children. They moved to Custer in 1953, where they raised their family and where she lived until her passing. She and her husband were charter members of the Custer Lutheran Fellowship.

Marge worked for the Forest Service, Black Hills National Forest for 27 years as the Administrative Assistant to the Forest Supervisor, retiring in 1994. She thoroughly enjoyed working for the Forest Service and the highlight of her career was meeting President George H. W. Bush and his wife Barbara. Marge was well known for her pies, and it was not unusual to hear someone exclaim that her pie was the best they had ever had.

Marge is survived by her son, John Baldwin, and daughter, Carmen Anthony; 13 grandchildren, 23 great-grandchildren, and one great-great grandchild.



Gary R. Blyth



Gary R. Blyth passed away on February 20, 2024. He was born on July 1, 1936, to Robert and Vera Blyth in Ogden, Iowa. He grew up a farm boy with a love for horses. He graduated from high school in 1954 and attended Simpson College in Indianola for two years and then enlisted in the Army serving time in Germany.

After his honorable discharge in 1959, he returned to Iowa to finish his degree in Civil Engineering at Iowa State University. From 1962 until 1969, he worked for a dredging company working all around the world. In 1969, he started his career with the Forest Service on the Carson National Forest, then to the Mendocino National Forest for a couple years, and then in 1974 he came to the Bighorn in Wyoming where he worked until his retirement in 1994. He spent the next 22 years helping friends. He had numerous trucks, horses, and a few good dogs. He loved the cowboy lifestyle. He loved his family and the outdoors, camping, and riding horses all day. He had an impeccable memory, and his stories were legendary and true. He was a helper at heart and that and his wisdom will be missed.

He is survived by his two children, Ann and Lance, and their families including two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren, a sister and brother and other family.



Michael Patrick Burke

Michael Patrick Burke passed away on March 15, 2024. Michael was born to Thomas and Katherine Burke in Baltimore, Maryland on June 3, 1946.

After graduating from the University of Maryland with a BA in philosophy, Michael made his way to Aspen, Colorado, working as a member of the Snowmass Ski Patrol where he met Sandy at the Red Onion Bar on January 1, 1972, setting off a lifelong love affair and 50+ years of marriage.

Michael returned to school, earning a degree in Geotechnical Engineering at Colorado School of Mines and moved to Durango in 1980 to begin a 25-year career with the Forest Service where he became an expert in retaining wall design, working all over the western US on many different National Forests. He was a lifelong Irish, folk and bluegrass musician, community member and advocate. His multiple bands include The Wild Geese and Bluegrass Tonight. He was inducted into the Colorado Bluegrass Society Hall of Honor in 2012.

Michael traveled extensively throughout the Western US and infused as much skiing, hiking, boating, camping and conquering of 14ers as was humanly possible. He is survived by his wife, Sandy; his children, William, Cody, Darcy; and his granddaughter, Ava.



Sandy Campbell

Sandy Campbell passed away on March 5, 2024. She was born January 3, 1941, to Ross and Emma Kimsey of Breen, CO. She was raised in Breen with her brothers, Roger and Roy Horvath. Sandy lived in Breen until her marriage in 1957 and then lived in Durango the rest of her life where she worked for the US Soil Conservation Service and the Forest Service.

Sandy grew up with an early love of reading that dominated her life. She loved the language and learning new words. Sandy received the 2022 Durango Library Champion Award after 26 years of faithfully shelving books. Sandy was a longtime member of First Presbyterian Church of Durango, where she and her husband served in several positions. Sandy loved to cook healthy meals for family and friends, and she relished stream fishing, especially in Hermosa Creek.

Sandy was married to the love of her life, Lee Campbell, for 67 years. She is survived by her brother, Roy (Suzy) Horvath of Breen; her three daughters, Valerie Bagby of Fort Collins, Sue Jerome of Grand Junction, and Renee Sebestyen of Durango; her grandchildren Lisa, David, Mike, Megan, and Stephen; and four great-grandchildren.



David James Condit



David James Condit passed away on December 30, 2024. Born August 9, 1967, he was the son of James Condit and Janet (Allison) Condit. He graduated high school in Colorado Springs and completed his undergraduate degree at Colorado State University. He was an outdoor enthusiast with graduate degrees in psychology and outdoor leadership.

He served 30 years in the US Air Force retiring as colonel. He served as Deputy Forest Supervisor on the Pike-San Isabel National Forests, Cimarron and Comanche National Grasslands from 2017 through October 2020. He first connected with the USFS mission while flying Modular Airborne Firefighting System air tankers through the cooperative program between the DOD and USFS. In aerial firefighting, he worked at all levels from crew member to national program manager. He went on to command the Hurricane Hunters and was most recently assigned as Air Wing Commander in Alabama. After leaving the Forest Service, he served four years in the US Custom and Border Protection.

David is survived by his wife, Stephany; his sons, Douglas and Justin; his parents, Jim and Janet Condit; and his sister, Colleen Condit.



William Conklin



William Conklin passed away on February 5, 2024, in his home in Wittmann, Arizona, at the age of 91. Bill was a Sergeant First Class in the US Army serving on the front lines in the Korean War. After returning from the war, he completed his degree in forestry from Iowa State University.

He worked for the Forest Service for 31 years. His career started on the Routt NF in Kremling, where he met his wife, Donna. She was a waitress at his favorite café, Jerry's Café. They married in 1962 and moved to White River NF in Dillon, continuing

his Forest Service career. They moved to Gunnison NF and started a family that grew to include Cindy and Scott Conklin. Bill transferred back to the Routt in Steamboat Springs where he was the district ranger for Hahns Peak Ranger District. They moved on to R-6 in 1980. His last stint with the Forest Service was in Grants Pass, Oregon, with the Siskiyou National Forest. He oversaw Lands and Recreation.

Bill's love of the outdoors continued until the day he died. He is survived by his wife, Donna, and daughter, Cindy.



Lewis Junior Compton



Lewis Junior Compton, of Hill City, South Dakota, passed away January 26, 2024, at his home. Lewis was born September 25, 1930, to Lewis and Eva Compton on the head of Spring Creek on a ranch, now known as the Medicine Mountain Boy Scout Camp.

Lewis grew up on his father's ranch near Moon, South Dakota. He served in the U.S. Army until his honorable discharge in 1955, receiving the Combat Infantryman's Badge and a Bronze Star. He married Charlotte Sutton of Albion, Nebraska, June 16, 1957.

Lewis worked as a logger before starting work for the Forest Service in 1958, retiring after 27 years. He was a member of the Custer Fire Department. He loved to hunt and fish and his hobbies included making violins and wood working.

Lewis is survived by his four children, Lewis (Charlene) Compton of Custer, SD; Kathy Chamberlain of Hill City, SD; Becky (Vernon) Huber of Huron, SD; and Jon (Tammy) Compton of Helena, MT, along with a number of nieces, nephews, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.



Dave Cook

Dave Cook died on November 12, 2024. He was born on July 21, 1939. He grew up in Steamboat Springs on his family's ranch on the Elk River. He graduated from Colorado State University School of Forestry and worked as a Wildlife Biologist for the Forest Service beginning on the Shoshone National Forest in Wyoming, then on the Grand Mesa National Forest and finally on the San Juan National Forest in Durango.

Dave was an avid deer and elk hunter; he also loved to fish and hike and explore little used forest roads and game trails. After retiring, he enjoyed working on the little farm outside of Greeley raising goats, rabbits, chickens and vegetables and taking care of horses and cattle.

He is survived by his wife, Jane; son, Mark; and daughters, Kay and Amy; five grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.



Orval DeVere Elliott

Orval DeVere Elliott passed away on January 11, 2024. He was born on May 26, 1934, in Buffalo Gap, South Dakota to Frank Orval Elliott and Ruth (Miller) Elliott. He grew up on the ranch that his great grandparents homesteaded in the 1800's.

Orval was a Forestry Technician and did forestry work and log scaling for a good part of his Forest Service career working mostly on the Custer Ranger District on the Black Hills.

Orval is survived by his children, Patty (Ted), Ruthie (Charlie), Frankie, Johnny, and Kara; and his significant other, Donna.

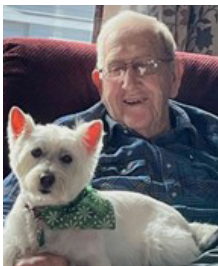


Van Curtis Elsbernd

Van Curtis Elsbernd died on October 29, 2024. He was born on February 14, 1951, in Williston, North Dakota to Lois Elsbernd. Van grew up in Crosby spending summers working on the family farm in North Dakota. Van met the love of his life, Wanna when they were 15 in high school. After high school, Van and Wanna headed to Bottineau to attend college where a year later in 1970, they married. Van finished his degree, a Bachelor of Science in Forestry, in Missoula, MT and moved to Dickenson, ND to start his career in the Forest Service. Van worked for the Forest Service for 33 years, including time in R-2 on the White River N. F. and after retirement he continued working as a consultant helping ranchers.

Van was dedicated to providing for his family and loving his grandchildren. He loved giving his time and volunteered for 17 years at Fort Collins High School coaching track. His other hobbies included hunting, fishing, buying guns, building guns, and reloading bullets.

Van is survived by his wife, Wanna; daughter, Angie; daughter, Tessa; son-in-law, Chris; brother, Steve; sister, Pam; and grandchildren Evan, Hannah, Payton, Raegan, Colten, and Broxton.



Marvin Wallace Hammer

Marvin Wallace Hammer passed away on February 1, 2024. Marvin was the seventh child of Joseph and Irene (Aubert) Hammer. He graduated from Custer High School in 1954 and met the love of his life, Donna Larson, in the fall of 1954 at the roller rink in Custer. They married on October 19, 1956.

Marvin worked as a seasonal employee on the Black Hills National Forest until becoming a full-time employee in 1958 and working twenty-five years until he retired in 1983.

Marvin loved anything that had to do with the outdoors. He was an avid hunter, fisherman, and loved camping. He spent many hours walking the creeks and canyons in the Black Hills with his kids and grandkids.

Marvin is survived by his wife of 67 years, Donna; his brothers, James and Chuck; daughters, Debra and Jeannette; son, Robert; six grandchildren; and ten great-grandchildren.



James Richard Hillis

James Richard Hillis passed away on Friday, June 7, 2024. Jim was born August 23, 1935, in Delhi, New York. He was the only child of Clark and Annis Hillis. Jim graduated from Syracuse University and began his career with the Forest Service as a Range Manager and Law Enforcement Officer. He took great pride in his work and worked in California, South Dakota, and several offices throughout Colorado including Saguache and Monte Vista. He retired as the recreation staff officer of the Rio Grande National Forest and retired after 33 years of service.

While he was working in Rapid City, South Dakota, in 1966, he met and married Patricia (Williamson) Biggs. Together they had four children: Steven, Beth, Tim, and Teresa. His kids were his pride and joy, and he spent many hours with them playing ball, camping, fishing, hunting, traveling, and attending their sporting events. Jim loved to tell and laugh at jokes and make up stories about “side-hill gougers” and “wampus cats” — all of which his children wholeheartedly believed!

He is survived by his children, Steven Hillis, Beth Quinlan, Tim (Kristi) Hillis, and Teresa Hillis Chester-Baker; his eleven grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren.



Jim Holloway



Jim Holloway passed away on January 8, 2024. Jim was born in Marion, Ohio, on May 5, 1964, and raised by his grandparents, Betty and George Holloway.

He joined the military when he was 18 years old and retired after 20 years in Alaska. Jim went on to serve his country an additional 21 years with the Federal Government. Jim worked in the Rocky Mountain Regional Office and supported the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest and the Thunder Basin National Grasslands. He transferred to the Small Business Administration, where he retired. During his time in service, he received his Bachelor of Science in Occupational Education and a Master of Business Administration.

Jim had a way of making people laugh. He always had a charm that people couldn't resist. Jim loved his time in the great outdoors, whether it was hunting, fishing, hiking, or camping. He also had a love for hot rods, from his 1972 Super Bee to his last restoration of a 1986 Chevy.

Jim leaves behind his daughters, Toni and Cara; his son, Connor; and his beloved grandchildren, JJ, Natalie, and Benjamin.



Robert Lee (Bob) Kapushion

Robert Lee (Bob) Kapushion passed away October 16, 2024. He was born on June 18, 1947, to John and Anne Kapushion in Crested Butte, CO.

Bob retired from the Forest Service in 2001. He was the kind of supervisor who pointed you in a direction, gave you a few pointers, and let you do what was needed to get the job done. He enjoyed most the part of the job that required him to be outdoors. As he moved up the ranks of the agency, he spent more and more time in the office, and now and then just had to get out and “smell the roses”.

Bob loved being outdoors with his brothers and family. He was a devoted husband and father. He is survived by his wife, Linda; daughters, Ronda, Lori, and Kristen; brothers, John and Marty; six grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.



Kenneth Lee Kane

Kenneth Lee Kane passed away on September 8, 2024. He was born on October 31, 1939, to Earl and Lora (Hayes) Kane. Ken was a veteran serving in the US Air Force before becoming a career employee of the Forest Service. Ken served on the Superior, Mark Twain, Chippewa, Tongass, and Rio Grande National Forests, as well as the Fort Collins Forest Service Computer Center, starting as an accountant in Duluth and working his way up to Administrative Officer of the Rio Grande Forest.

Ken retired and spent his final 28 years in Doniphan, Missouri, where he was a very active member of his community and church, leading various charitable events. In 2006, the Doniphan Chamber of Commerce honored Ken and his wife Carole as the partner “Citizens of the Year”.

Surviving are his children, Kevin (Judy) Kane and Kerry Kane; second wife, Jayne Kane; grandchildren, Christopher, Kyle, Riley, and Trevor; and one great-granddaughter, Marceline.



Frank Lee Leonard, Jr.



Frank Lee Leonard, Jr. passed away June 16, 2024. Frank was born February 17, 1938, to Frank Lee Leonard, Sr. and Eleanor Mae (Hipbshman) Leonard. He married Virginia Lee Schnelle on July 3, 1971.

Frank worked on the road maintenance crew of the Grand Mesa Uncompahgre, Gunnison N. F. He oversaw the maintenance and upkeep of thousands of miles of Forest Service roads. He would hire equipment operators and train them in road maintenance standards for the agency.

Surviving family members include brothers, Towser and Bill Leonard; sister, Mildred Card; son, Wayne Leonard; daughter, Dannita White; six grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.



John Murphy

John Murphy was born Jan 1, 1936. He passed away on Sept 2, 2024. John grew up in Canonchet, Rhode Island, and after graduating high school, he attended the University of Maine to study forestry. He left school to join the U.S. Army in February 1958. Upon fulfilling his active-duty requirements with the army, he finished his forestry studies at the University of Rhode Island and graduated in 1963. He joined the Forest Service and was assigned to the Black Hills National Forest in Custer, South Dakota. It is there where he met his wife, Florence. After retirement, John and Florence returned to his beloved Black Hills, where they lived happily for 30 years.

John is survived by his wife, Florence; children, Maureen, Shawn (Kathy), Shaila (Bruce) and Michael (Tanya); five grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.



Mary Louise Nelson

Mary Louise Nelson passed away on May 24, 2024. She was born on February 11, 1963, in Price, Utah, to Louis and Carol Christianson Nelson.

While working towards her forestry degree at Utah State University, Mary worked as a seasonal forestry technician on the Manti-La Sal National Forest. Upon graduation, Mary started her forestry career with the Ouray Ranger District on the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests, as part of a timber marking crew. In 1990, Mary found her permanent home with the Saguache Ranger District on the Rio Grande National Forest, as a forestry technician. She earned her Forester appointment in 1991 and quickly advanced to Supervisory Forester. Mary devoted her career to the Saguache Ranger District, retiring in February 2019.

Mary entered the Forest Service at a time when there were few professional women in the agency. Never one to be dissuaded from a purpose, Mary leveraged her knowledge and skills in forestry management to gain acceptance in the timber industry and cross traditional gender boundaries in the agency.

Mary loved animals raising pigs, turkeys, and chickens, naming each one. As a lifelong Grateful Dead fan, Mary named many of her animals after Grateful Dead songs and lyrics (she also named more than one timber sale the same way).

Mary's love of the land, love of people, and love of life will be her enduring legacy.



Linn Pettijohn

Linn Pettijohn passed away on November 12, 2024. Linn was born May 24, 1951, to Alvin and Ellen Pettijohn. He spent his childhood years on the family farm 25 miles northeast of Burlington, Colorado, near the Kansas border. Linn received a degree in Forest Management Sciences from Colorado State University in 1973. He pursued this degree as he “always wanted to live in the mountains.” Linn met his wife of 50 years, Deborah Baughman, while they were students at CSU.

Linn worked for the Forest Service for almost 40 years. During that time, he was stationed at Kaibab, Arizona, Walden, Saguache, and Meeker, Colorado. He was an avid outdoorsman. He loved trap shooting, hunting, camping, hiking, and motorized recreation. Linn was a good small engine mechanic. There were several times a snow-mobile engine would end up on the kitchen table.

Linn is survived by his wife, Deborah; daughters Ellen (Andy) and Katie; siblings Mary and Wayne; and grandchildren, Benton, Brooke and Jordyn.



Eufrazio Cornelio (E.C.) Quintana

Eufrazio Cornelio (E.C.) Quintana passed away on March 21, 2024. He was born on May 2, 1939, to Jose Lino and Rose Quintana. E.C. spent his formative years on the family ranch in Garita, New Mexico, graduated from Pueblo Catholic High School in 1959, and served in the US Air Force for four years. He received his bachelor’s degree in accounting and finance in 1974 at the University of Southern Colorado. E.C. dedicated 39 years of his life to serving the US government, beginning his career at the Pueblo Army Depot before transitioning to the US Forest Service as a budget and accounting analyst.

He met the love of his life, Della Silva, in his mother’s kitchen. They exchanged vows on May 1, 1965, and welcomed their son, James, in 1966 and daughter, Emily, in 1972. Over the years, they created cherished memories while residing in Pueblo, Fort Collins, Glenwood Springs, and finally settling in New Castle in 2007. He found solace in activities such as camping, hunting, fishing, solving word puzzles, and traveling.

E.C. is survived by his wife, Della; daughter Emily (Kelly) Bates; five grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; sisters, Esther (Fred) Rodriguez and Priscilla Trujillo; and brother, Timothy.



Stephanie Marie Martinez Rocco

Stephanie Marie Martinez Rocco passed away on January 12, 2024. Stephanie was the daughter of Victor and Sophia (Mascareno) Martinez.

Stephanie made a career with the Forest Service working as a wildland firefighter. Her career began in Arizona but took her to Montana, Idaho, New Mexico, and then to the White River in Colorado in 2005 where she was a dispatcher until her retirement in 2019. Stephanie loved her work and coworkers so much that after her retirement, she returned each summer to work for a few months.

Steph and her husband, Dale, spent nine winters in Quartzsite, Arizona, where she loved to collect stones, gems, and minerals which she cut, polished and crafted into jewelry. Steph also collected Southwest Native American Art including drawings and Navajo woven blankets and rugs. Steph thrived in her career and in her artistic accomplishments.

Steph is survived by her husband of 17 years, Dale Rocco; brother, David Martinez (JT Keller); sister, Victoria (Gus) Phelps; stepsons, Evan Rocco and Drew (Kristin) Rocco and their children, Zoe and Delaney.



John Linde Sundberg



John Linde Sundberg passed away November 1, 2024. He graduated from Hayden Union High School in 1953 and attended Colorado A&M, studying forestry where he met his future wife, Beth Olsen. He served in the US Army from 1958 to 1960. After being discharged, he began a 35-year career with the Forest Service.

After retiring, he started a weed-spraying service and continued working until 2023. He was an active member of the Hayden Congregational Church and was a lifetime member of the Hayden Masonic Lodge. He served many years on the Hayden Town Board and served as mayor for several years. One of his primary hobbies was wood-working and creating beautiful furniture pieces. He loved to tell funny stories about his past experiences. John and his wife enjoyed using their camper to explore the outdoors and took four wonderful road trips to Alaska through the years.

John is survived by his wife, Beth; his sister, Barbara Ledford; brother, Eric; sons, Jon and Sig; daughter, Kristen Miller; stepsons Conner and Kale Johnson; grandsons Jon Wayne, Evan, and Erick; and three great-grandsons Luke, Cole and Kent.



Forrest Henry Tellock

Forrest Henry Tellock passed away on September 14, 2024. He was the son of Forrest and Virginia Tellock. Forrest earned an associate's degree from Wyoming Tech in 1993 and married his wife Christine in that same year.

Forrest was a man of many talents and an unwavering work ethic. He was deeply involved in his community, working on a local ranch, as an auto mechanic, at the local feedlot, and at the Arctic Cat Store. He volunteered with Search and Rescue, the local Fire Department, the seasonal Forest Service Fire Crew, and as a Reserve Deputy with the Sheriff's department. In 2004, Forrest joined the Douglas Ranger District on the Medicine Bow Route National Forest. His leadership and expertise eventually led him to become the engine foreman. In 2007, he took on the role of Forest Service Law Enforcement Officer, a position he held with honor until his passing.

Forrest is survived by his wife Christine; sons, Wyatt and Morgan; daughter, Paige; and brother, Henry.



Jean Adele Gelvin Thomas

Jean Adele Gelvin Thomas passed away on June 30, 2024. Jean was born in Wray, Colorado on June 4, 1954. She grew up in rural Colorado. Her childhood surroundings shaped her love of nature and the outdoors.

Jean worked for the Forest Service with an emphasis on water rights management beginning in 1984 until her retirement in 2016. Jean gave special meaning to the phrase 'never leave a stone unturned' as she collected stones from wherever she traveled. Jean and her husband Bill began their adventures together in the summer of 1974 in Yellowstone National Park. They married, studied at the University of Montana in Missoula, returned to work in Yellowstone, then Estes Park; Fort Collins; Fairfax, VA; and Windsor. Jean graduated from the University of Montana with a master's degree in geology with a specialization in hydrology.

Jean is survived by her husband, William; son, David; sister, Judy; and brothers, Ed and Les.



Guy Malcolm Virkula



Guy Malcolm Virkula passed away Monday, November 25, 2024. Guy was born February 13, 1934, to Edwin and Florence (Tripp) Virkula. Guy graduated from Lead High School in 1952. After high school, he joined the US Navy, proudly serving from 1953 to 1957. After receiving his honorable discharge, he returned to Lead, South Dakota, and attended Black Hills Teachers College. He married Kay Buckmaster in Deadwood on October 19, 1958.

Guy joined the Forest Service in 1958, where he worked in timber management for over 30 years. After retiring from the Forest Service, he continued to work with timber management in the private sector for many years. When he wasn't working, Guy enjoyed hunting, fishing and spending time with his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Guy is survived by his wife, Kay; children, Kimberly (Rodney) Davis and Garth (Theresa) Virkula; grandchildren, Cable, Casey, Brian, Ashley, and Whitney; and six great-grandchildren.



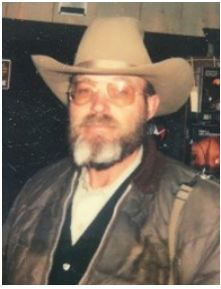
Gilbert (Gil) Walker



Gilbert (Gil) Walker passed away on May 29, 2024, at the age of 99. Gilbert (Gil to his many friends) was born on May 16, 1925, in Mohler, Oregon to Lester and Lillian Walker.

He spent his early years in Mohler and Nehalem, Oregon. He served his country by enlisting in the Marine Corps, rising to the rank of Staff Sergeant by the conclusion of his honorable discharge. He and his wife Arlene moved to Wyoming in the 1950s. They had a ranch, raised sheep and cattle, farmed, and did outfitting and guiding. They later owned and operated a lodge near Ten Sleep. In 1975, he became a part of the Forest Service, serving 15 years until he retired in 1990. He was the GDA on the Buffalo R.D. of the Bighorn National Forest for many years. Throughout his life, Gil loved hunting and fishing, firing his last successful shot at an elk at age 90.

He is survived by his three children, Larry, Lee and Lynn; three grandchildren, Amanda, Grant and Tennille; and four great-grandchildren, Issac, Jackson, Caroline and Bastian.



Wayne F. Wood Sr.



Wayne F. Wood Sr., of Durango, Colorado, died on Oct. 7, 2024. He was born on November 22, 1932, in Fairplay, CO to Earl and Ollie Wood. He had two sisters Evelyn and Sandra and a brother Gary. Wayne spent his youth on family ranches and farms around Canon City. After high school he joined the Air Force and served in the Korean War. He married Rosanna Markle in 1956, and they had two sons, Rowdy and Jay. He received his Bachelor of Science degree from Colorado State University in 1962.

His career in the Forest Service took him to Hot Sulphur Springs, Idaho Springs, La Veta, Eagle and Pagosa Springs Colorado. FS duties included being a district ranger and timber staff. Wayne retired in 1983 from the San Juan NF. Upon retirement he pursued his dream of having a ranch. His passions were his family, hunting, fishing, his ranch, his horses and livestock.

He is survived by sons Rowdy and Jay and their families.



Not Forgotten



Frederick (Fred) J. Backenstose

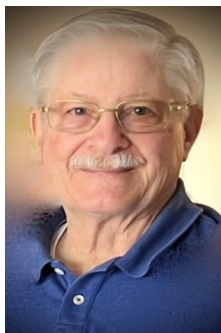


Frederick (Fred) J. Backenstose passed away on March 13, 2023. He was born June 4, 1931, to Frederick and Pearl Backenstose. After serving in the US Air Force, he met and married Mary Louise Cvetetic, his wife of 68 years. Together, they raised six children.

Fred joined the Forest Service after moving to Sheridan, Wyoming, serving 30 years before retiring. He enjoyed skiing and flying. Because of his love of flying and planes, Fred spent years building a KR-2 experimental aircraft, which is still flying today.

Fred is survived by his six children, Rick, Julie, Mitchell, Sue Ann, Lisa, Kristofor, and his granddaughter, Annie.

James Leigh (Jim) Fischer



James Leigh (Jim) Fischer passed away on June 22nd, 2023. He was born on December 30th, 1945, to James H. Fischer and Virginia Fischer.

He graduated from Ft. Collins High School in 1964 and went to Colorado State University where he earned a degree in Civil Engineering. He worked summers for the Forest Service surveying roads and trails on the Arapahoe-Roosevelt National Forest before he graduated. After college, Jim accepted a job as an engineer on the Apache National Forest in Arizona. His career led him to the Lincoln National Forest in New Mexico, the Boise National Forest in Idaho, the White River National Forest in Colorado, and the Shoshone National Forest in Wyoming, before finally returning to his

hometown of Ft. Collins, where he was the Forest Engineer for the Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest until he retired in 2004.

Jim enjoyed fly-fishing, camping, playing the trombone and singing. Jim was the ultimate family man, always doing the things he loved with his family and friends.

He is survived by his wife, Norma; sons, Jay and Lee; brother, Dennis; and four grandchildren.



Nick Gerich

Nick Gerich passed away on January 21, 2021. He was born on April 20, 1954. Nick grew up in Ohio and came to Colorado to further his education at Colorado Mountain College. He volunteered with Forest Service from 1992 until 2008 and contributed thousands of hours of volunteer service as a biological science aid and technician. In 2008 he finally got his permanent position as a hydrologic technician and worked on the Leadville District until his death in 2021.

Nick was a trusted water rights expert for the district, but also excelled as a wildland firefighter, sawyer, and Contracting Officer's Representative. He had a mechanical mind and kept facilities going when budgets were slim and would say yes to helping whenever he could.

He is survived by a sister Denise in Ohio.



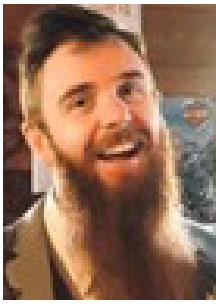
Esther Pauline (Polly) Hammer



Esther Pauline (Polly) Hammer Polly Hammer passed away November 13, 2023. She was born November 13, 1940, to Francis Emmett Hammer and the former Leona Eunice Nickell. Polly served in the United States Army and worked as an archaeologist responsible for the heritage programs on the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests. She retired in 2001.

She was a dual member of the American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary. She was a witty and loving person and always had a warm spot in her heart for her cats.

She is survived by niece Donita and her family Dewayne, Jason, Jeremie, Michael and Matthew Sims.



Kyle Jamison Jones

Kyle Jamison Jones died on December 16, 2023. Kyle was born on September 5, 1989, to Kevin and Ginger Jones.

Kyle attended Walla-Walla Community College, where he earned an associate of Arts degree and finished his education at Boise State University with a degree in Public Relations. Kyle started working for CPTP-A where he soon found his love for fighting fire. Once his education was complete, he decided to pursue his passion for wildland fire fighting for the Forest Service. This allowed him to do two of his favorite things -- seeing new places and meeting new friends. Kyle married this high school sweetheart, Victoria Cruz, and together they had two sons.

Kyle is survived by his wife, Victoria; his two sons, Kendrix and Kellen; and his parents, Kevin and Ginger Jones.



James Sosten (Jim) Lujan



James Sosten (Jim) Lujan passed away on January 27, 2023. He was born on June 6, 1933. After high school he served in the US Army. He was a purchasing agent in the contracting office of the San Juan National Forest. After his retirement from the San Juan, he moved to Farmington, New Mexico.

He is survived by children, Nestor (Loretta) Lujan and Victoria (Dave) Espinosa; stepchildren, Joseph (Regina) Alcon, Gina (John) Sandoval, Bernadette Alcon & Patrick (Nicole) Lujan; and numerous grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren.



LeRoy Howard Self



LeRoy Howard Self passed away August 25, 2023. He was born on January 23, 1934, to Howard C. Self and Florence M. (Rea) Self at the Self Ranch in Falfa, Colorado. He served in the Army's first armored division as a medic during the Korean war where he met his wife of 67 years Gisela Lourke Self.

LeRoy took a job as a heavy equipment operator for the Job Corps that ultimately led to his employment with the Forest Service running heavy equipment and use of explosives. He taught and certified trainees in dynamite blasting in the Denver area for many years. LeRoy retired from the Forest Service in 1987 and returned to his family farm located near Allison, Colorado.

LeRoy enjoyed Navajo Lake and spent many hours on his boat fishing and taking his family water skiing and camping.

LeRoy is survived by his daughter, Dione Lee, and son, Howard, as well as four grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.



*A limb has fallen from the family tree,
that says please don't grieve for me.
Remember the Best Times, the laughter, the song,
the Good Life I lived while I was strong.*





To all the Forest Service employees, retirees, families, and friends who gather here at the Memorial Grove to honor and reflect. Thank You!

This annual event is made possible by your support and the support of the Pikes Peak Ranger District and the Rocky Mountaineers (a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization).

Thanks to Brent Botts, retired Pikes Peak ranger, for the lunch arrangements!

To help cover the costs of maintenance and ceremony expenses, including lunch, donations can be made to the Rocky Mountaineers! For ease of donation use QR code.



Rocky Mountaineers
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Fort Collins, CO 80527