



William Allan Jespersen

February 20, 1936 - December 14, 2011

Bill "Whitey" Jespersen was born on February 20, 1936 in Helm, Ca. He attended school in Shandon, Ca and his senior year in Yreka, Ca. He was an avid football, basketball and baseball player but his love of sports was rodeo and he became one of the greatest contenders throughout the years.

Bill was drafted into the service in 1958. In 1959 he married Donna Spencer and they began their marriage traveling the rodeo circuit. Their son Billy was born in 1960 followed by their daughter Shelley in 1963.

Bill participated in his first professional rodeo at the age of 13. The Rodeo Cowboy Association agreed to give the young cowboy an exhibition ride. He rode the bull and brought the crowd to their feet. In his high school years he helped to form the first High School Rodeo, which was held in Coalinga, Ca. At the age of 17 the determined cowboy was given an honorary RCA card, making him the youngest "professional" cowboy of his time. Shortly after, Bill won the first of many wins in Salinas, Ca. The talented cowboy joined the circuit when he was 19 and his winnings accumulated with the help of experienced hands such as Jim Shoulders, Gene Rambo and his father Allan Jespersen.

After many years of successful rodeo, Bill decided his days of riding rough stock was over, but it wasn't meant for him to go out forgotten. In 1981 at the Etna Rodeo, a young friend was kicked by a bucking horse. As the boy left the arena, he grabbed Bill's hand and asked him to ride his bull. To his family's dismay, Bill tied the bull rope on, cinched down his hat and showed Etna how

bulls were supposed to be ridden. At the age of 45, the tired cowboy left the arena as he had left it 32 years ago at the age of 13, with the crowd on their feet, a new buckle on his belt and a tear in his eye.

Bill is survived by his wife Donna; son, Billy (Bonnie); daughter, Shelley Jespersen Lindley (Dan); grandchildren, David and Matt Jespersen, Nate and Makayla Lindley. He is preceded in death by parents, Allan and Lillian Jespersen; brother, Reg; and nephew Reg Allan Jespersen.

Services will be held at the Montague Community Center, Thursday, December 22, 2011 at 1:00 pm. Barbecue to follow.