

James Graham Ramey

James Graham Ramey, a South Dakota pioneer and trailherd cowboy, died Sunday, July 19, 2015, at the Philip Nursing Home in Philip, SD, having recently moved there from his home near Deadwood. Cowboy, Father, Senator, Husband, Yarn-Spinner, Friend, Public Speaker, Grandfather and Great-Grandfather are roles that Jim lived and relished. Born February 12, 1917, to John Henry Ramey and Ruth Margaurite (Graham) Ramey at the house his father built in Dowling, SD, Jim always said it was 30 below zero when his father rode horseback to get the mid-wife.

Jim and his two older sisters went to grade school in the country schoolhouse at Dowling. He then went to high school in Philip and later in Wall. His parents and sisters (Alice, a nurse and Ollie, a teacher) paid for his room and board. Always short of money during the Depression, Jim asked Ted Hustead for a job, and became one of the first employees of Wall Drug. Because Ted was unable to drive, he hired Jim to drive a Model A to Rapid City every Saturday. There Ted would purchase goods to sell at his store.

After graduating from Wall, Jim received a speech and debate scholarship and attended Dakota Wesleyan in Mitchell.

His parents 'grasshoppered out' at Dowling and moved by team and wagon to Bear Creek, west of Wanblee, SD. Jim trailed the cattle on horseback and liked to say "There wasn't a fence between Wall and Wanblee in nineteen hundred and thirty-three."

On August 18, 1939, Jim married Myrtle Olive Alden in Philip, SD. They lived on Corn Creek where they used a cross-cut saw to cut wood for cooking and heat. When Jim's father was killed by lightning in 1944, Jim and Myrtle moved to Bear Creek. They lived in the log house there until 1965 when they purchased a ranch twelve miles northwest of Belle Fourche, SD. They worked the ranch until their retirement in 1983. They lived in Belle Fourche, and then in 1989 they purchased their dream place south of Deadwood. They had a few cows and horses and always welcomed family and friends.

During World War II Jim was occupied by raising horses for the Cavalry. He was supplied with a government stud and periodically would trail a herd of horses to Fort Robinson in Chadron Nebraska, for government pickup. Jim always said he hoped those boys could ride, because he gave them some feisty horses!

Jim served as President of the State Fair Board from 1950 to 1954. He was a delegate from SD to the national Republican Conventions in 1952, 1956, and 1968. He served as a Republican State Senator from 1954 to

1964. He was President Pro Tempore of the Senate and Chairman of the Taxation Committee. A lifelong friend of the business community, he was proud of the fact that SD does not have a state income tax. Jim served for 5 years on the South Dakota State Banking Commission. He was a director of an insurance group in Denver, CO, for several years. He was a director of the hospital and retirement home in Kadoka from 1953-1965. He was President of the Belle Fourche Chamber of Commerce for 2 years. He was a 32nd degree Mason, an active member of the Buckaroos, the Custer Trail Ride and the St. Onge Livestock Yards.

Jim was raised on the mother's knee with a Bible and called Jesus his friend. He was active in the Hisle Sunday School, the Kadoka Presbyterian Church, the Belle Fourche Baptist Church, and the Nemo Community Church. He was often called upon to deliver sermons in Hulett and other churches in the Northern Hills Region. He was baptized with his sisters in the Cheyenne River by the Rev. Wynn.

Jim was preceded in death by his wife, Myrtle; infant son, Jeffrey; grandson, Brian Schaefer; and granddaughter, Grace (Tom) DeVries.

He is survived by his four children, Joy (Larry) Dolezal, Ann (Gary) Schaefer, John (Anita) Ramey, and Ellen Jane (Bryan) McMahon. He also leaves behind 10 grandchildren and 34 great-grandchildren.

Jim will be remembered best for his many yarns and stories about cowboys in the old days. An avid reader, especially of history books, Jim requested that donations be made to your local public library or the Nemo Community Church.

Condolences may be sent to the family at www.kinkadefunerals.com.



John 15:12-17 New International Version (NIV)

¹² *My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.* ¹³ *Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.* ¹⁴ *You are my friends if you do what I command.* ¹⁵ *I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.*

*The family invites you to join them for fellowship and lunch
at the Nemo Community Center following the committal service.
We thank you for your presence and condolences.*

In Loving Memory Of
James Graham Ramey

Born

February 12, 1917
Dowling, South Dakota

Died

July 19, 2015
Philip, South Dakota

Funeral Service

Saturday, July 25, 2015, at 11:00 a.m.
Nemo Community Church
Nemo, South Dakota

Officiant

Pastor Nick Rombaugh

Eulogy

John Ramey

Accompanists

Rosie Seaman ~ Mary Christopher

Singers

Patsy ~ Marie ~ Lolly
Anise Ramey

Musical Selections

"Lily Of The Valley"
"Abide With Me"
"God Be With You"

Congregational Hymn

"What A Friend We Have in Jesus"

Pallbearers

All Jim's Grandsons

Interment

Nemo Cemetery

In Loving Memory Of



James Graham Ramey

1917 ~ 2015