Edwin "Ed" Carl Nelson



NOVEMBER 27, 2017

NELSON, Edwin Carl (Ed or Eddie)
1925 – 2017

The cattle have been sorted, the truck and trailer sit idle, the phone lines are quiet, the random visits to neighbours and friends have ceased. The big heart has stopped beating.

Edwin C. Nelson has gone to manage the grasslands of heaven after passing away Monday, November 27, 2017 completing 92 ½ years of work on earth. He loved his family, loved the community, loved the land, and loved life.

Ed Nelson was born at the family farm northeast of Stavely on June 22, 1925. He served in the Royal Canadian Navy from 1944 to 1946 and after the war came back to Stavely to court the neighbour girl Ottalie Malchow whom he married on November 3, 1949.

Ed was very proud of his family. He is lovingly remembered by Ottalie Nelson, his wife of 68 years; his six children, Brenda (Ron Fleming) Nelson, Brian (Deb) Nelson, Peggy (Steve) Johnson, Maryann (Blane) Meek, Randy (Julie) Nelson and Tim (Chris) Nelson; his 15 grandchildren, Silas Fleming, Rena (Brandon) Ponath, Stacia (Mike) Humphrey, Curtis (Angie) Nelson, Jackie (Jake) Gour, Trina Burgess, Robert Johnson, Colin Meek (Leslee), Lauramy (Matt) Hopley, Dayna Nelson (Clint), Keira Nelson, Scott Nelson, Danielle Nelson, Sarah Nelson, Tianna Nelson; 19 great grandchildren; brother, Roy Nelson; 3 sisters-in-law, Josephine Nelson,

Helen (Harv) Shevalier and Helen Malchow and many nieces and nephews.

Eddie was predeceased by his parents, Inga and Carl Nelson; brother, Art Nelson; sisters, Marion Peters and Astrid Lamotte; brothers-in- law, Tedford Malchow, Ray Peters and Lou Lamotte; and sisters-in-law, Nora Nelson, Gladys Nelson and Shirley Nelson.

Ed’s dream and passion was to own land and so he and Ottalie purchased a ranch west of Stavely where they raised kids, cows, sheep, dogs, cats, horses, pigs, chickens and gophers. Eddie was a big, generous man with a huge heart who would help anyone in need - quite often even prior to completing his own work.

Coupled with his desire to improve the grazing options for fellow farmers and ranchers, and his love of the land, Ed was very instrumental in creating the Spruce Ranching Co-op and the Waldron Grazing Co-op which continue as models of grazing co-ops. He was a director for Spruce and a director, Chairman of the Board, secretary and general manager (often without pay) for the early years of the Waldron. Being the main impetus behind the purchase of the Waldron Ranch and creation of the Waldron Grazing Co-op, he later co-authored a book about it.

With the impending closure of the Stavely Auction Market in the early 1970’s, Ed was motivated to lead a group of individuals to create a co-op to purchase it. The Stavely Livestock Co-op was formed and proceeded to purchase and operate the auction market, with the intent that this vital community service would not be lost. Edwin was the chairman for the life of the co-op which ended when the Auction Mart was sold.

During the infancy of the oil and gas expansion in the surrounding area, Eddie saw another need to ensure that the landowners were treated fairly by the oil and gas companies. He was instrumental in starting the Willow Creek Surface Rights Society which was a non-profit organization to help the landowners negotiate with

the resource companies in lease agreements and land reclamation. Many of the policies and standards created by this group are still in use today.

In the late 1970's Ed was part of a group of farmers who were defending themselves against the Canadian Wheat Board for 'over delivery' of grain quotas. They were storing their surplus grain in a farmer owned elevator. After the CWB plea bargained with the rest of the farmers to reduce the charges, Ed refused to admit guilt and proceeded with the court case. In the end he was the only one to receive an absolute discharge.

Edwin was always interested and involved in politics and being a staunch conservative and Western Canada supporter, he joined the Reform Party of Canada as a founding member.

Ed's passion for range management lead to his involvement in the Society for Range Management where he became a director and eventually president of the International Mountain Section of the SRM which included Montana and Alberta. He was an outspoken and effective advocate for the SRM and also became a founding committee member of the Society of Range Management Endowment Fund where he remained until his passing.

In the early years of settlement of this area, there were a number of rural schools and post offices which were very important in the development of the area. To commemorate these sites, Ed chaired the committee that marked these locations with metal posts and bronze plaques. He was ½ of the crew that installed them. During the installation of these markers it was decided to create a history book of the schools and Ed stepped up to become the chairman of the book committee.

Ed acted as chairman of the committee to establish the transportation corridor around and across the Pine Coulee Reservoir. Again, to ensure the vitality of the Stavely community, Ed was persistent in making sure that the road across Pine

Coulee remained, on what is now Hwy 527, to allow landowners west of the reservoir easier access to Stavely. He rallied the advisory committee and neighbours to lobby the government and the causeway was built.

To Ed, education was very important, so he became a founding member of the Stavely Education Foundation which continues to support Stavely students in the pursuit of secondary education.

Edwin was a life-long member of Beaver Lodge #27, I.O.O.F. He joined the Lodge in June 1944, became Noble Grand in 1961 and District Deputy Grand Master in 1979.

Ed was also a member of Stavely Elks Lodge for sixty-six years and served as Exalted Ruler in 1963.

Eddie & Ottalie's home was open to everyone – from the Mexican university students who came to stay while learning English and the ranching way of life, to the wandering souls he found along the highway. Everyone was made welcome and became a friend. He was a generous community man who believed in his vision and loved any event where he could visit with friends and relatives. The bi-annual Malchow Reunion was a priority as he had grown up surrounded by Malchows.

A Memorial Service will be held for Ed at the Stavely Community Hall on Saturday, January 27, 2018 at 2:00 pm.

Donations in Ed's honor may be made to:
Claresholm & District Health Foundation
Box 2638, Claresholm, AB T0L 0T0

OR

The University of Alberta
C/O Katherine Irwin, Faculty of Agriculture, Life, and Environmental Science

2-06 Ag/For Building,

University of Alberta

Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 2P5

Please direct to "Range Team Travel Fund"

Messages of Condolence

Condolences to your familys on the loss of Eddy the family will have several memories of his successful life .

— Barney& Beverly Cochlan

Maryann: so sorry for your family's loss. Your Dad was a remarkable man and will be greatly missed. Hold your precious memories close.
Sincerely, Vicki

— Vicki Eskeland

Ed was larger than life--in his person, his presence and his accomplishments. Thanks for being such an inspiration Ed, your love of land and people was extraordinary and you will be much missed.

— Ian Dyson

Sincere condolences to everyone.
I will always remember dad talking about how physically strong Ed was.
Alvin could not believe what he could lift when they worked together on different projects in the shop.
He was hard working and kind.

— Brian & Judy Dahl

I'm so sorry to hear of the passing of your Dad and now your Mom. Sorry I did not know until after your dads passing of his funeral. Your mom and dad were our 2nd family. Always remembering him stopping into our house before continuing up the road to home. They will always hold a special spot in my heart.

— Donella Sewell

