



Harold "Butch" Volbrecht

August 20, 1938 - May 27, 2010

LEWISTOWN, MONTANA: Harold Dean "Butch" Volbrecht, age 71, formerly of Richey, Montana, passed away on Saturday, May 22, 2010 at the Montana Mental Health Nursing Care Center in Lewistown. A Life Tribute Service will be held at 3:30 P.M. on Thursday, May 27, 2010 at the American Lutheran Church in Richey, with Celebrant Sandy Silha officiating. Silvernale-Silha Funeral Home of Richey has been entrusted with the arrangements. Butch was born on August 20, 1938 in Glendive, Montana, the son of Herman and Gladys (Anderson) Volbrecht. He was raised and educated in Richey, graduating from Richey Public High School with the class of 1957. Butch married Sheryl Wienke in Richey on September 10, 1966. Butch had been a Farmer and Rancher his entire life. He enjoyed rodeos, riding bulls and participating in bull fighting. Butch was the Deputy Brand Inspector for the state of Montana for over 20 years. He served as the Mayor of Richey for 2 terms (8 years), until he moved back to his farm. Butch enjoyed hunting, fishing and watching his children participate in sporting events. He especially cherished the time spent with his four granddaughters. Butch was preceded in death by his parents; one sister, Loretta Unruh; four brothers, Albert (A.D.), Bob, Bernard and Vernon and three brothers-in-law, Tony Unruh, Bill Keysor and Bud Crockett. Survivors include his wife Sheryl and son, Clint Volbrecht and his wife Lissa all of Richey, son, Cole Volbrecht of Billings, Montana; daughter, Kelly Kunick and her husband Doug of Glendive; four granddaughters, Megan and Ellie Volbrecht, Caitlin Kunick and McKenna

Volbrecht; two sisters, Betty Keysor of Richey and Jean Crockett of Australia; one sister-in-law, Frances Volbrecht of Sidney, Montana and many nieces and nephews. Remembrances and condolences may be shared with the family at: www.silvernale-silhafuneralhome.com Harold Dean "Butch" Volbrecht Life Tribute Service May 27, 2010 American Lutheran Church, Richey, Montana

Welcome: Master of Ceremonies Opening Prayer: Myrtle Schultz Introduction of Candle Lighting: Celebrant With Butch's death, a hole has been left in the lives of his family and friends. Although Butch is gone, we join together today to remember and pay tribute to a life well lived, and look to find hope and healing in sharing of memories, friendship, love. The light of the flame is symbolic to us for remembrance of loved ones who have gone before. Butch's four granddaughters, Megan, Ellie, Caitlin and McKenna wanted to do something special for their grandfather, and so each will light a candle to honor Butch and his touch on the lives of family, friends, and community. Let the light of these candles signify the ever-present love and memory of Butch Volbrecht, which will live on in our hearts. The candles will be lit as we listen to the song, "Love Without End" chosen by Butch's family. Song: "Love Without End" by George Strait Candle Lighting by the granddaughters Eulogy:

Celebrant Harold Dean "Butch" Volbrecht was, as a family friend stated, just "a good ole boy." Born, raised, and educated in the Richey, Montana area, Butch also spent his entire life here, working, playing, raising a family, serving his community; just living life to the fullest and doing and giving the best he had to offer. Butch was the youngest of eight children, kind of the "oops" in the family. He learned to work hard and play hard growing up on the family ranch doing his chores and having the great outdoors as his playground. A couple of favorite places to spend his playtime included a nearby dam and a clay cave out in one of the ranch's canyons. A favorite playmate was his niece, Myrtle Schultz, who was close to Butch in age. They might spend the day at the dam playing until Butch's mother would honk the car horn, letting them know it was time to head home. Or they would head out for the clay cave and make dishes and marbles with the clay they would find in the cave. Butch developed a

great love of the outdoors that stayed with him throughout his life. Butch's early schooling included some time at a country school, but for the most part, he attended school in Richey. During the winters, he and his brother, Bob, would stay in a shed in town during the school year, rather than travel back and forth the ten miles between the ranch and Richey. Butch made lifelong friends in school. One such friend, Dick Miller, recalls a bit of mischief he and Butch cooked up. They decided to give themselves haircuts, Mohawks actually. Butch didn't want to be the first one to get the Mohawk; he worried that Dick would back out of getting one too. But Dick assured Butch he would let Butch cut his hair into a Mohawk and they proceeded to give each other the haircuts. Dick laughs when he remembers his mother being very angry with them, and telling them that if they would have had enough hair left, she would have scalped them. In high school, Butch played basketball for the Richey Royals, and he loved the game. Not a tall fellow, Butch was quick and athletic and could jump and run with anyone on the court. He was a good ballplayer. After high school, Butch continued play some independent basketball and also played baseball with the same bunch of guys. They claim their team was pretty good, even beating a semi-pro baseball team from Minneapolis several times. Butch was also doing some bullriding and he and Dick traveled up to Canada to rodeo. It was there that a bull contractor Dick knew needed a bullfighter and asked Dick if he knew of anyone that might be interested. Dick asked Butch, Butch agreed and Dick agreed to be the clown. Butch signed on and was very adept at bullfighting. He was good on his feet and very quick. Butch always made sure people knew he was the bullfighter; the one who engaged the bull so no one got hurt. He was not the funny man, or the clown in the arena. He was the bullfighter. Upon graduating from Richey High School, Butch worked and lived on the ranch with his brother Bob. In 1966, Butch married Sheryl, and Sheryl and her young son, Clint, moved out on the ranch with Butch and Bob. It was quite an adjustment for Sheryl and Clint, as the house had no indoor plumbing. Water was brought in from the

well and of course, the bathroom was an outhouse. When Butch married Sheryl, he told her that Clint would totally be his son. Butch was true to his word, Clint became Butch's son, in name and of the heart. Sheryl and Butch had two more children to complete the family, son, Cole and daughter, Kelly. Butch would tease Sheryl, telling her that when he married, he had "doubled his expense and his play time was cut in half." Butch and Sheryl and their family always worked hard together, and played hard together. Their lives included extended family and theirs and their children's friends, in all their work and in all their play. Butch was fortunate in many ways. He had a good family, good friends, and he was able to work and spend most of his time outdoors; he loved his cows, especially those black angus; he truly enjoyed fencing, of which there seemed to be no end, and for recreation, he could hunt, fish and camp to his heart's content. Summers were spent ranching, farming and haying, while every other week-end or so the family headed up to Fort Peck with friends, staying in the tents and campers, and doing some fishing. With fall came hunting season which Butch had always done with friends combing the hills, canyons, and draws of the ranch. The kids were also included in this as Butch and his friends would have the youngsters spread out and walk the draws, pushing the deer towards Butch and the other hunters. Ed Crockett, a friend of Clint's remembers doing this with another young fellow, walking the drainages trying to spook deer towards Butch. The boys were somewhat mindlessly walking towards where Butch was supposed to be when suddenly Butch started shooting, scaring the boys, who yelled at Butch to stop shooting at them. Butch yelled back that he could see them, he was shooting at a big buck. Butch got his five point buck and got the boys calmed down. Clint was the one in the family who enjoyed the hunting with Butch. They even went west a few times to elk hunt, although Clint felt it was more the pack trips on horseback and camping that Butch loved about these trips. Along with tending the cows and the hunting, Butch enjoyed butchering and processing meat. He had a butcher shop on the ranch, and loved to butcher deer and cattle for himself and all the neighbors. He made a

wonderful smoked sausage, and when he processed meat it was again, a family affair including any and all friends available. Butch didn't even seem to mind when the kids would stamp everything in sight, including themselves, with the words "ground beef." One of the things Butch's friends liked and one of the things the kids' friends liked about Butch was that he was fun to be around and he made it fun for the kids. Son Cole does admit that his dad had a gruff demeanor. It could intimidate kids until you knew him. Butch was his own man with a mind of his own, and he wasn't afraid to tell you what he thought. One of the kids' friends termed Butch as appearing "growly", and laughed as he said that "you didn't have to wonder about what Butch was thinking, and if you didn't know, you just weren't paying attention!" Greg Sodt recalls staying out at the ranch with Cole and Kelly and while the others would sleep in, he would get up early because he knew Butch was a heck of a cook and would be cooking up a big, wonderful breakfast. But then if you were up you also got to help with the chores. After Butch and Sheryl had the kids, Butch gave up bullfighting, it was just too risky for a man with a family to support and kids to raise. But he probably wouldn't have had time because when the kids were old enough and were in sports, Butch was their biggest and most vocal fan. Sheryl says she finally moved across the gym, because Butch really got into the games. Clint played football, Cole's game was basketball and Kelly was into volleyball. Clint tells that the year his team won the state football championship, there is a school video that shows the game and celebration on the field afterwards. Clint can see himself in a crowd of people going up and down, but cannot remember what was happening. Come to find out, it is Butch, lifting Clint above the crowd over and over in jubilation. Clint's friend, Ed Crockett remembers when football season would begin and the team would have two practices a day. When the early morning practice would end, Butch would just seem to show up, and he would take the boys out to the ranch where he would have them hauling and stacking square bales until the second practice later in the day. It was Butch's way of helping the boys get into shape. Cole played college basketball in Williston, and Butch would drive

over winter roads to watch the games. He was an proud and ardent fan of his children's sports. Butch taught all his kids to drive when they a very young age. He would hold them on his lap, and down the road they would go. Butch also taught them the importance of a good work ethic, and how to enjoy working. Even as gruff and hardnosed as Butch could appear, he was friendly, good-hearted, was fun to be around and would help anyone. When he was outdoors, he was always whistling. He was a tough cowman and working cows was his favorite thing to do. When he worked those twenty years as a brand inspector, Butch didn't just count the cattle, he worked them right along with the ranchers. There was a time for about eight years when Butch lived off the ranch. The land was put into CRP and Butch and Sheryl moved into Richey and had the Stockman Bar. Butch also served two terms as the mayor of Richey. He took his share of phone calls, but small town life wasn't too controversial. Whenever Richey had a big event going on, Butch would hold a feed at the bar to help support the event. But his heart remained on the ranch. Butch wasn't complicated. He was a cowboy. He was a meat and potatoes man, who liked his Miller Lite, and was comfortable everywhere in his hat, jeans, and boots. He liked the old time country music, and would record and watch the National Rodeo Finals on television. He and Sheryl went to the Finals several times. When they began to have the Old Timers' Rodeo, someone asked him if he would bullfight for the rodeo. Butch replied that when the bulls were as old as he was, he would take up bullfighting again. Butch loved to cook, especially big breakfasts, and deer steaks. He built many pots of stew and chili, and he didn't even mind doing the dishes. Butch wasn't much for sending Sheryl flowers for special occasions but he would bring her the first crocus' and sweetpeas from the fields in the spring. He and Sheryl loved to dance, jitterbug. In their later years they would spend a few weeks in Arizona during the winters, and Butch and Sheryl would go dancing every day. They would go at four in the afternoon to get a seat, eat at six and dance until nine. They had great fun dancing throughout their married life. But Butch was

a true country boy, he never liked noise and commotion and really did not like the traffic in Arizona. These later years, it was his granddaughters who held a special place in his heart. Granddaughter Megan would “do” grandpa’s hair and put pretties in it. It will be through the stories and memories you share with these young ladies that will keep Butch alive in their hearts. Help keep that warm light glowing by telling them stories about your experiences and memories of their grandfather. As a cowboy, as a husband, father, grandfather, and uncle, as a friend, Butch Volbrecht was a very special man, and he will be greatly missed. Please listen to this next song chosen by Butch’s family, as you remember the Butch you knew. Song: “ May I Have This Dance” by Anne Murray Time for Sharing: At this time, anyone who would like to share a memory of Butch is invited to come forward. Please use the microphone so all may hear, and also please introduce yourself. Sharing Closing: Celebrant At the end of his life, Butch was afflicted with Alzheimer’s disease. This disease steals away our loved ones long before their physical death occurs. It is a heartbreaking and cruel disease. Sheryl and Butch’s family would like to extend their deepest gratitude for the love and caring the friends and neighbors here in the Richey community gave to Butch during this time of confusion and wandering. The way you looked out for Butch deeply touched all of his family. On behalf of Butch, please listen to the “Alzheimer’s Prayer”, author unknown. Alzheimer’s Prayer “Dear Lord, please grant my visitors Tolerance for my confusion, Forgiveness for my irrationality, And strength to walk with me into the mists of memory my world has become. Please help them to take my hand and stay awhile. Even though I seem unaware of their presence, Help them know how their strength and loving care Will drift slowly into days to come, And when I don’t recognize them, That at times I will. Keep their hearts free of sorrow for me, For my sorrow, when it comes Lasts only a moment-then it’s gone. Finally, Lord, please let them know How very much their visits mean to me, As even through this relentless mystery, I can feel their love. Amen” There is no finer tribute to Butch than the number of people who came here today to remember him. Every life has

value, and Butch's life touched the lives of all who knew him. The touch this cowboy, this good ole boy, Butch Volbrecht has left on the hearts of family, friends, and community will live long into future generations. The light of remembrance will be forever carried in the hearts of all who loved him. To Sheryl, Clint, Cole, Kelly and to all of Butch's family, as your friends and your community, we grieve with you and we grieve for you. To everyone here today, thank you for your love, caring, friendship, and support. Thank you for being here for this important time. Please continue to share your memories of Butch with his family. Let them know the impact Butch had on your life. Butch Volbrecht will be alive as long as he is remembered. "To live in hearts we leave behind, is not to die." (Thomas Campbell, "Hallowed Ground") Let us all join together in praying the "Lord's Prayer" "The Lord's Prayer" Celebrant: To close Harold Dean "Butch" Volbrecht's life tribute service, the family invites you to join in singing "Amazing Grace."

Tribute Wall



“ *Harold "Butch" Volbrecht*

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