



Merle Aus

November 6, 1924 - April 16, 2019

Merle Aus, age 94 of Glendive, Montana passed away at Billings Clinic Hospital early in the morning of April 16th. A memorial service will be held at 2:00 P.M. on Tuesday, April 23, 2019 at Zion Lutheran Church in Glendive. Pastor Avis Anderson, Merle's dear friend, will officiate. Silha Funeral Home of Glendive has been entrusted with the arrangements.

Born in Scranton N. D., November 6, 1924, Merle grew up during the Depression, the last of the nine children, of William and Emma (Syverud) Aus. Merle attended a one room country school named Washington in Buena Vista township.

When he was 7 years old his father gave him a two year old mare that soon had a foal. From then on, Merle was in the horse business.

To attend high school, Merle traveled on two railroad lines to Sioux Falls S.D. from there a short distance to Canton where he attended Augustana Academy, a Lutheran boarding school, graduating in 1942. Roping was always Merle's favorite sport and he liked baseball and basketball

In 1940 the family moved to a ranch at Amidon N.D. In 1949 Merle bought the ranch adjoining his parents in partnership with his older brother Wilmer, a combat veteran of WW II.

At the Slope county fairgrounds in Amidon Merle organized a saddle club with a membership of about 35. The club enjoyed trail rides, quadrilles, and horseback games. At the same time he developed an interest in team roping that lasted all his life. Merle and his roping partner Rex Cook won the first

North Dakota team roping championship.

In 1957 intrigued by an ad, Merle contracted to supply the horses, wagons and western gear for an enterprise in Medora, a dramatized story of Teddy Roosevelt's life in the North Dakota Badlands. At his first appearance in Medora he was also given the role of Roosevelt's hunting guide Joe Ferris. That continued for three summers. In 1959 he met a Minnesota English teacher, Rose Marie Goetz, hired to assist the costume designer. They were married the next summer and returned together to the theater. That September the couple moved to Glendive where Merle opened the Glendive Saddlery, a saddle shop and western wear store on Merrill Avenue.

He also passed the real estate salesman test and over time was associated with the Erickson-Neilson Agency, the Neilson Agency, Ken Kubesh's Realty One and finally for Ward Fenton broker at Fenton Enterprises.

From the beginning of his life in Dawson County Merle volunteered with horse events: the Glendive Spring Exposition, Dawson County Fair Open Horse Show, Dawson 100 Club for which he served as president for the first several years.

When his daughter Kristin turned five, Merle set her on the horse show circuit. His breeding program produced a horse named Apache Joe A which earned a world Championship 1982.

Merle taught saddlemaking for 15 years at Dawson Community College and Circle High School.

In retirement, at age 81, Merle wrote his autobiography "It's Better to be Lucky than Good." The book now in its fourth printing sparked renewed contact with old friends and new acquaintance with people related somehow to parts of the book.

Survivors include his wife Rose Marie, his daughter Kristin, nieces and nephews on both sides, and a host of friends all of whom feel so much loss. Merle was preceded in death by all his siblings, all their spouses, his two sisters-in-law and their spouses.

Remembrances and condolences may be shared with the family at: www.silha

funeralhomes.com.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

APR **23**. 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (MT)

Zion Lutheran Church
401 Riverview Avenue
Glendive, MT 59330

Tribute Wall



“ *Merle Aus*

December 07, 2022 at 04:10 PM



“ *My dad, Tom Shaw, told me that Merle made a 'rough out' saddle for him in 1963. Dad rode that saddle and cared for it exquisitely, until his passing on July 9, 1996. I have the saddle but the one stamp on it is so faded it is not readable. Can anyone shed light on Merle as a saddlemaker. I'd really appreciate it. thank you.*

*Becky Shaw
darkrunner59@yahoo.com*

Becky - August 18, 2021 at 06:53 PM



“ *"Last evening I watched a remarkable PBS NATURE program about horses. The segment of a gentile, patient, intuitive cowboy as he saddled his horse for the first time brought tears to my eyes and I immediately thought of Merle (the only real cowboy I have ever known) and our two summers with OLD FOUR EYES in Medora where he met his treasured Rose Marie. The minute the program ended, I open the computer to write him, learning then of his demise. I send my condolences to Rose Marie and to Kristin. May the celebration of this phenomenal gentleman and his life ease your pain and warm memories help fill the void. Happy Trails Cowboy. Sherwood Snyder*

Silha Funeral Home - May 16, 2019 at 01:11 PM

SJ

“ *Merle and Rose Marie were our neighbors when we lived near the Bloomfield turnoff north of Glendive. I was just a kid at the time, but I remember Merle branding both my dad's and sister's horses for us. It was pretty amazing that he did it while the horses were standing up; and they hardly flinched at the hot branding irons. Rose Marie was also one of our teachers at the Deer Creek School. Good times and fond memories!*

Stan Jonutis - April 29, 2019 at 02:09 PM

TR

“ *My strongest memory of Merle is how he knew so much about horses! I remember asking him about one breed and just off the top of his head he had so much to tell about that breed, he sure knew horses! I also must share that I remember once seeing him at the fair many years ago watching Kris ride her horse and Merle was just grinning ear to ear as he was so proud of her. Anyway looks likes he has a beautiful day for his funeral. I am thinking of you both Rose and Kris.*

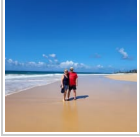
Tim Russell - April 23, 2019 at 12:52 PM



“ *Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Merle Aus.*



April 23, 2019 at 12:12 PM



“ So sorry for your loss of such a great man! My folks, Danny and Norma Jean, have many wonderful memories of gatherings years ago at the Aus ranch.

Judy Rowse - April 23, 2019 at 10:58 AM

PG

“ Will be thinking of you today and in the days to come RoseMarie, strength for today, and for the tomorrows also.
Paul and Barbara Gibson

Paul Gibson - April 23, 2019 at 10:16 AM

MC

“ Hi,

I am sorry to read that Merle died. Back in the old days, I remember him fondly and of course, you were a wonderful friend of my mother, Jane Carey. I hope you are well.

Mary Alicia Carey Cox

Mary Alicia Cox - April 23, 2019 at 07:48 AM

FT

“ From, Donna Dobson Tobin & Steve Tobin purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Merle Aus.



From, Donna Dobson Tobin & Steve Tobin - April 23, 2019 at 04:45 AM

GS

“ so sorry for your loss Kristen.

Gayle Sturgis - April 22, 2019 at 10:31 PM



“ A memory of Merle

By Craig Nelson

*I roped in his arena and help to brand his calves,
Gathered cattle from his pastures, shared some stories and some
laughs.*

*Worked horses in his corrals, and together they built some fence.
He helped me learn some lessons when I didn't have much sense.*

Said he'd never own a place, without a creek that didn't flow.

Showed us how to put living in a life, before your time to go.

Left a lasting impression on the trail of life he trod,

Ever faithful to his family his friends and to God.

There's sorrow in his passing, yet fond memories remain.

*Life is made better with men like Merle, gentle breezes and soft
rain.*

Craig Nelson - April 22, 2019 at 07:21 AM

YD

“ Yvonne D. purchased the Country Basket Blooms
for the family of Merle Aus.



Yvonne D. - April 21, 2019 at 10:26 PM

JS

“ I'm sorry for your loss Rose Marie, I remember tinning your roof 15 - 20 years ago. You made lunch for me and the guys every day and it was mandatory that we came in with Merle at 10:00 and 3:00 every day for coffee,tea, milk and homemade cookies, Merle would take a break from chores and we from roofing. You opened your home to 3 strangers like we were family, and it felt like it. I just wanted you to know I've never forgotten how Gracious the two of you were to us

Jim Schneider - April 20, 2019 at 04:55 PM

DD

“ Dear RoseMarie and Kristen,
Our thoughts and prayers are with you. We have lost a great coffee buddy. Merle and Terry met in 1962 when he won Little Britches All-around and received a horse breast collar made by Merle. He has enjoyed having him for a friend ever since.
Terry and Diane

Diane Dohrmann - April 20, 2019 at 02:27 PM



“ *Simply Chic Mixed Plant Basket* was purchased for the family of Merle Aus.



April 20, 2019 at 07:40 AM

TH

“*Kristin and Rose Marie, I am so sorry for your sad loss. Clearly Merle will be remembered fondly by many.*



Teresa Hathaway - April 19, 2019 at 12:34 PM

LG

“*Merle was a favorite icon of the Glendive area. I loved his books and his stories about horses and longhorn cattle. He was such a gentle, kind person. My thoughts and prayers to you as you grieve your loss, Rose Marie and Kristen. Laura Grzanic*

Laura Grzanic - April 19, 2019 at 10:35 AM

DK

“*Rose Marie, it is well to remember that and how June 9, 1960 was the very luckiest day of Merle's great life. A good man, too, he was. David Karnos*

david karnos - April 19, 2019 at 10:20 AM

GE

“*Grace Koffler Evinrude lit a candle in memory of Merle Aus*



Grace Koffler Evinrude - April 19, 2019 at 07:51 AM

FL

“ Frank & Janette Legato lit a candle in memory of Merle Aus



Frank & Janette Legato - April 19, 2019 at 01:53 AM

BA

“ Merle was a great man. Words that come to mind are kind, calm, sensible. I thought of Merle as the cowboy's cowboy. He branded both of our young horses for us. When my horse fell upside down in the hay manger, Merle was one of the men who helped her get out and right-side-up again. He just knew how to do things like that. I trusted Merle's quiet strength and my mind's eye always sees him wearing a big white cowboy hat.

Mrs. Aus, you remain forever my absolute favorite teacher of all time. I have tremendous respect for you.

My sympathies to the entire Aus family. I am thinking about you.

Bobi (Jonutis) Allard - April 18, 2019 at 06:12 PM

KS

“ Karen Schock lit a candle in memory of Merle Aus



Karen Schock - April 18, 2019 at 04:46 PM

MD

“ RoseMarie and Kristin - so very sorry to hear - Have wonderful memories of the kindness each of you shared with me each and every time I saw you - I have fond memories of Merle when, at the start of each quarter/semester, I would check in on his evening saddle making class to make sure all was going smoothly - he always had a good attendance and it was one of the more popular evening classes. You are all in my thoughts and prayers.

Marilyn Dutton - April 18, 2019 at 04:02 PM

MD

“ Marilyn Dutton lit a candle in memory of Merle Aus



Marilyn Dutton - April 18, 2019 at 03:56 PM

CB

“ My heart is heavy hearing of the loss of such a great man, Merle. Such a gentle soul he was. It was such an honor to know him and work with him on the Fair for All project and being on the board for Dawson 100 club. The heavens gained a special angel for sure. Fly high Merl,

Cindi Byron - April 18, 2019 at 09:21 AM

Julia
Neves

“ Kristin & Rosemarie
I am so sorry to hear of Merle's passing. My thoughts are with you all.
Sincerely
Julia Neves

Julia Neves - April 18, 2019 at 12:41 AM

Alice
Bachmeier

“ *Alice Bachmeier lit a candle in memory of Merle Aus*



Alice Bachmeier - April 17, 2019 at 10:15 PM

MH

“ *RoseMarie, Kristin and Bruce, our thoughts are with you. Merle epitomized what is true and correct within a community of good people.*

Mke and Connie Hilger - April 17, 2019 at 08:00 PM

RB

“ *Rose Marie and Kristen I am so sorry for your loss. Merle was an amazing man and a great role model for so many. He will be greatly missed. My love and prayers are with you.*

Robin Blankenship - April 17, 2019 at 05:11 PM

MK

“ *Merle was the epitome of masculinity tempered with kindness and a twinkle in his eye. We have lost one of the "good guys" who wanted to be lucky rather than right. May his soul rest in peace and may his loved ones rest knowing his pain and struggle are over.*



Myrna Kintz - April 17, 2019 at 04:46 PM

MH

“ So sorry to hear about Merle. Prayers for the family
Mona Humphrey

Mona Humphrey - April 17, 2019 at 03:27 PM

MG

“ RoseMarie and Kristin,
I am so sorry to hear of Merle's passing. Please know you are in my
thoughts and prayers. ~Mary Jo Gehmert

Mary Jo Gehmert - April 17, 2019 at 12:20 PM

JS

Rosemarie and Kristin,
Merle was always such a fine person. May the grief you feel upon his
passing be lightened knowing he lived a generous and very admired
life. So sad...

Jackie Schultz - April 19, 2019 at 12:29 PM

YD

Dear Rose Marie and Kristin,
My brother Wes just called to tell me about Merle's passing, and both
of us are so sorry he is gone. May God bless, comfort and strengthen
you. He was one of my favorite uncles, so kind and gentle, talented
and humble and with a quiet sense of humor. You are in our thoughts
and prayers. Please take good care of yourselves.

Peace and love,
Yvonne

Yvonne Deitz - April 21, 2019 at 10:41 PM

DH

I grew up riding a shetland pony that Merle sold to my Dad. My parents
were members of Amidon riding club. A good life well lived, Rest in
Peace
Dudley Homelvig
Nome Alaska

Dudley Homelvig - April 30, 2019 at 07:10 PM