



## Ray Zimdars

August 29, 1935 - December 6, 2011

Glendive, Montana: Ray A. Zimdars, age 76, passed away on Tuesday, November 29, 2011 with his family by his side at the Glendive Medical Center in Glendive. Visitation will be held from 11:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. and from 6:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. on Monday, December 5, 2011 at the Silvernale-Silha Funeral Home in Glendive. A Family and Friends Service will be held at 7:00 P.M. on Monday, December 5, 2011 at the Chapel of the Silvernale-Silha Funeral Home in Glendive. A Life Tribute Service will be held at 10:00 A.M. on Tuesday, December 6, 2011 at Zion Lutheran Church in Glendive with Celebrant Sandy Silha officiating. Services may also be viewed via live webcast at: [www.zionglendive.com](http://www.zionglendive.com). Interment with military honors will be held in Dawson County Cemetery in Glendive. Silvernale-Silha Funeral Home of Glendive has been entrusted with the arrangements. Ray was born on August 29, 1935 in Glendive, a son of Henry and Mary (Bush) Zimdars. He was raised and educated on the family farm west of Bloomfield. Following his education Ray worked a variety of jobs for many people. For two years he labored as a welder for Shell Oil in addition to working on TV towers for L.W. Jones. Ray also worked as a piler for Holly Sugars out of Sidney, Montana and he later drove the beet truck for Elwin and Warren Prevost. Additionally, he had a partnership in a hay grinding, custom haying and harvesting and the Big Z Ranch with his son. Even with all those other jobs Ray continued to operate the family ranch during those years. In 1954 Ray enlisted in the United States Army Reserves and was stationed in Yakima, Washington for

two years before he returned home. Shortly after his return home Ray married Margaret Meyers on September 15, 1957 in Glendive and to this union four children were born. Ray was honorably discharged from the United States Army in 1963. With his growing family he ran the Big Z Ranch, Inc., west of Bloomfield, for over fifty years. He had remained active at the ranch until the time of his death. Ray had many hobbies, some of which included hunting geese and elk, but he enjoyed the hunting trips the most. He also had a habit of buying, selling and trading. He liked attending the bump-n-run races and rodeo calcuttas, he was a true cowboy at heart. His favorite time of the year was always haying season as he loved raking hay. However his favorite part of everyday was watching the sunrise in the morning. Ray was considered to be a big instigator at times, especially at someone else's expense. On the other hand he cherished the moments spent on his special Father-Daughter dates. Ray was very proud of his family and he enjoyed each and everyone of his grandchildren all in their own way. Ray was preceded in death by his parents; his wife, Margaret; daughter, Gailenne Meyers; grandson, Theodore; brothers, Jup, Lyle and Ivan; sister, Phoebe; and his mother and father-in-law, Rhoda and Sandy Meyers; dear friend Irene Dobson with whom he shared many fond memories. He was survived by his daughters, Wilhelmina "Jo" Bain of Richey and Mary Sue (David) Volk of Fargo, North Dakota; son, Ty (Mary Beth) Zimdars of Bloomfield, Montana; twelve grandchildren, Brandi Joseph, Travis (Lynn) Bain, Taylon Bain, Tyrel Bain, Hannalee Volk, Haylee Volk, Abraham Volk, Emmalee Volk, Maria Zimdars, Talia Zimdars, Angelia Zimdars, and Wayne Zimdars; six great grandchildren, Codie Meyers, Jaiden and Ami Joseph, and Trace, Kord and Roper Bain; brother, Dick (Yvette) Zimdars of Beach, North Dakota; sister, Dorothy Meidinger of Glendive; sister-in-law, Helen Zimdars of Helena, Montana; brother-in-laws, Donald Meyers of Laurel, Montana and Terry (Norma Sherman) Meyers of Glendive; sister-in-laws, Dorothy (Duke) Albrecht of Fort Morgan, Colorado, Debbie (Tom) Meissner of Lewistown, Montana and Marcia (Garey) Ketcham of Fort Worth, Texas; and numerous nieces and nephews. Remembrances and condolences

may be shared with the family at: [www.silvernale-silhafuneralhome.com](http://www.silvernale-silhafuneralhome.com). On a normal day in the life of Ray Zimdars, it would be about this time that Ray would be taking his daily nap. Ray was an early riser, and if it were after 8am, he would greet you with a "good afternoon". If he were up, you would do well to be up also. Ray would say, "this is not an old folks' home... people die in bed... get up!" Chores were done, the animals taken care of. 4:30 am in the summer was a good time for Ray and his brother-in-law, Don Meyers, to chat for an hour or two a couple times a week, and Ray had daily morning phone visits with Fred Lee, who would try to keep Ray on track. Early Saturday morning calls gathered much important information, which Ray would pass on to his son, Ty, over morning coffee. Sunrises and mornings were the best time of Ray's day. How to describe Ray, well...his son, Ty says that his dad was a man that "could teach you to do anything and talk you into doing everything else." Useful things he taught Ty and the other kids included "pull my finger", nursery rhymes, kissing the "ow-ies". Important life lessons were: how cuddling with your children in a chair helps everything seem better, playing games helps pass time, and never be left without a sharp knife. Ty also says his dad was a man with a rugged exterior and a heart of gold. Nancy Meyers called him a "bear with a big heart." Nancy also speaks of Ray's caring and compassion, recalling that during a visit to Ray's ranch one August, her favorite uncle died. Ray was ready and willing to run Nancy to Billings to catch a plane to the funeral. When that plan didn't work out, Ray sat up all that night with Nancy and listened to her stories about her uncle. Ray's soft side often got lost under his gruff and somewhat intimidating demeanor. His daughter Mary Sue termed him stoic. A young, confused Dyke Boese once asked about Ray, "is he mad or happy?!" Ray did things one way, his way, and expected so should you. He was brusque and to the point, yet soft-spoken, prone to mumbling, and you had to really listen to hear him. And oh was his language colorful, and his grin huge! Ray was a man who believed in testing a friendship before you trust a friend. Once you passed his test you were part of

his family. Ray grew up on the family homestead near Bloomfield, Montana. As a young man, he joined the Army National Guard and spent a couple years in Washington. That was as far as he ever went from home. He married Margaret Meyers in 1957 here in Glendive, and they began their life together on the family farm and ranch. They began their marriage with no indoor plumbing but much love and determination. Together they built a life, worked the ranch, and raised their four children, three daughters, Gailenne, Willa "Jo", and Mary Sue, and a son, Ty. Margaret was Ray's helpmate and soulmate. Many times she was working beside him doing ranch chores. Although Ray wasn't very domestic, he could sew and once made Mary pajamas; he could crochet, and according to Ty, he could warm up coffee. Ray and Margaret were good neighbors and friends to many in the area, working together during haying, branding, and harvest, playing cards and socializing on week-ends. One cute story told by Pat Boese happened while playing cards. Ray was known as a "gas man" because, well, he would just let it rip wherever, whenever. One evening Ray gave the table of card players his gift of gas. Pat jumped up to find something to deodorize the room with and all she could find was bug spray. Pat turned the spray on Ray, spraying him and the air around him! Margaret defended Ray saying that Pat was going to kill him! But friendship prevailed and they all survived the gas and bug spray to laugh many times over it. Ray and Margaret, opened their home and ranch up to many young people, who would come and stay week-ends and summers, including brothers-in-law Terry and Don Meyers, and their friends' kids, Dusty and Dyke Boese. Ray taught them, along with his own children, to work, hunt, fish, mechanic. Ray always had a list of projects. The kids called it "slave labor." Ray might invite friends over to hunt or just visit over beer, but first he would present a list of "important projects" that needed to be done first. And always he believed in on the job training. Everything was a "do it now, emergency!" Just because you hadn't ever done that particular job before didn't disqualify you from being expected to get it done, and done right the first time. Ray was not one to stand around and guide you or help you. He'd get

you started and then walk away, letting you blunder on. One thing you learned very quickly was that Ray had a place for everything and if you used something, it had better be put back where you found it. You always tried to do your best for Ray, because you knew you'd hear about it no matter what. Ray loved to jab at people, get a reaction, and stir the pot. Whenever he got friends to help on projects, and he always did, his pay was beer or BS, whichever they wanted and both if they would let him. Ty tells that his dad was not a man of materialistic things. "You didn't need gloves to fence 'cause they cost money and your hide just grows back anyways. If you were fencing before a Bump 'n Run race, you surely don't need to replace all the posts if there is a good one on both sides 'cause posts cost money." One chore everyone hated was pulling and straightening nails. Ray never bought nails. He had buckets of used nails to use on the many projects around the place. And no one could straighten a nail like Ray could. A frugal man, Ray entered into many interesting joint ventures with Ty in Ray's later years. Ty says "some he knew about and some not." But Ray could always tell Ty how much money Ty owed him. Ray loved calcuttas and auctions and he always bid with partners, some knew they were partners with Ray and some not. He always knew how much they owed him. But if he won a calcutta, Ray always paid his partners their share. And he was always sure he could make money on his winning auction bids reselling the stuff on Trading Post. Over the years, when Ray wasn't working the ranch, you probably could find him hunting with family or his many friends. Mary remembers riding with her dad to and from school, and hoping they did not see deer on the way, because the ride would turn into a hunt. Ray hunted everything, deer, antelope, elk, upland birds, waterfowl, and turkeys. If Ray was teaching you to hunt or you didn't have your own gun, he would give you a gun with enough recoil to set you on your rear. You might find yourself hunting from the back of a pick-up, and antelope weren't worth shooting unless both of you were traveling at high speed. With deer, Ray hunted all season but didn't take one until the last day. When he took you hunting though, Ray didn't wait for the best shot, he'd tell you to put one in

them, and slow them down. He didn't care if it was gut shot or shot in the leg or rear. And you better hurry up and shoot something and get some blood on you, even if it was a raccoon, just so everyone could stop and have a snort! Ray and his good friend, Dennis Dempewolf, did a lot of elk hunting together out by Darby, Montana. One year, Ray drew a bull tag for the area near Fort Peck. Ray wanted to take Ty, who was about 10 years old, with them on the hunt. The three of them went, camped out and began hunting. Ray spotted a nice bull elk on a ridge, took the shot and hit the bull. The elk went over the ridge and down into a basin below. Ray decided to follow the bull on foot, while Dennis and Ty drove over to the other side to meet him. Dennis and Ty drove a ways, stopped, and Ty got out to see where his dad was. Ty was standing on the ridge watching his dad when a gust of wind came up, and a shot rang out. Ty jumped and ran back to Dennis yelling that Ray had shot his cap off, not realizing the wind had blown it off. Yes, there were some wild times hunting with Ray, and many memories have been made. In his later years, Ty says Ray semi-retired and appointed himself event coordinator of the Big Z Ranch. Ray was perfect for the job of foreman with his list of projects and his many friends and family needing "work therapy". Ray became an avid fan of the Bump 'n Run races, mostly because Dyke and Ty raced in them. Ray'd throw down challenges to the drivers wondering if they had a gas peddle in their cars. Ray and various partners had some not so profitable ventures bidding in the calcuttas. Ray loved trying to make Ty's car go faster, which in itself was odd because Fred Lee went on many drives with Ray and says they even hit 40 mph once. Ray was known for his bullheadedness; if you told him he couldn't do something, he did it. He would rather owe you than cheat you. He was known for beer and BS. He always made you feel welcome and he was fun to be around. Ray enjoyed his cigarettes, and had a pack in every vehicle. Ray loved coffee, sour cream chocolate cake with sour cream frosting, lemon meringue pie, and oreo cookies. He will be remembered for warm milk fresh from the cow, and cold coffee. For Ray,

jigsaw puzzles were a competition; and did he really hold out one piece so he could be the one to put that last piece in? He teased Margaret about her TV soaps, but loved and taped the show Dallas; that was not a soap! He had wonderful penmanship. He wrote notes every day on the elevator calendars recording the weather, its high and low, who came to visit, and included colorful comments on the day's projects. When giving directions, Ray would use the old names of places just so no one knew what he was talking about. He had a huge soft spot for his grandchildren, and took great pride in all he had, family, farm and ranch, and friends. Ray had a deep love and respect for the land and his animals, and he instilled that in his family. The animals, the land and the machinery were always taken care of first. He grew up on his family's homestead, and went on to make it his life's work. It was important to him that it remain in the family. Ray was certainly a unique personality. People enjoyed Ray and the experiences he shared with those who knew him will continue to bring smiles and chuckles for years to come. Memories Many of the memories Ty wrote were included in the eulogy. Ty did end his thoughts with the following about his dad: "Truly a man I hated with all my energy at times and loved him with all my heart. He knew how to push my buttons, and I would like him to push them again. Throughout life I made friends and he stole them. Wish he would be able to continue doing it." The following thoughts and memories are from people who knew and loved Ray and wrote these words and more to be shared. Terry Meyers' wife Norma wrote, "You could always count on Ray to behave in a certain manner-sometimes contrary to what you wanted –but consistent. For the longest time after Margaret's passing, he would not stop at our house unless Terry was home...a gentleman did not visit a lady without her husband being there. Standards. Eventually he relented and I enjoyed our Monday afternoon coffee and dessert sessions. The political discussions between the 'rabid Republican' and the 'demented Democrat' weren't highly constructive but they were fun." Sandy Babb cherishes memories of "Papa Ray, aka as Gramps, taking the big kids and the little kids sledding, sometimes on mountains of snow he had built in his yard. Also

remembered is hunting with "Pops" and hours of driving down country roads looking for the "the big one..." "Papa Ray, you are loved and missed more than you will ever know." Love you lots...Sandy & kids" A cousin, Darwin Meyers, sent this e-mail: The last time I spent with Ray was about two weeks ago. He and his family spent a week at our house in Lake City, MN, which is about 40 miles from the Mayo Clinic. Ray was undergoing all the tests they could give him. None of which were to give us all any hope. Ray took them all in stride, never to have any big complaint. I think he liked the attention he got from all those young nurses and female doctors. We all knew the outcome and tried not to treat him any differently than we would if he had been his old self. I admired his strength and many times all of us found it hard not to show our emotions. Sneak tears and Kleenex happened more often than any of us wanted to show. Ray and I have had a special bond over 30 years plus or minus of going to the 'ranch' (some years for more than just hunting). From "thanks for coming" and a wave, "see you next time" to hugs, tears and I love you. Big change for all of us, not just the gruff and tough Ray, but for this grumpy old man, too! I loved Ray like a brother and felt more comfortable with him than I do with my own siblings. He was a true friend. We all should have someone like him. Ray and I have spent hundreds of hours together one on one in a pick up chasing game or over our morning Cask & Cream. The calls that we would have two or three times a month from one or the other are missed already. Sometimes when Ray called, he had already done chores; so, for him, it was late. But, for us the day had not begun and we could still be sound asleep. Can you call heaven with a cell phone? Hunting with Ray was quite an experience for a tree-stand Minnesota hunter! As the years went by, it became more important to see and spend time with Ray than to hunt. There is a big hole in my heart now, but I'll keep you in my thoughts and little by little that hole may be filled with happy memories of you and the time we had spent together! I miss and love you, old friend! Darwin Daughter Jo wrote the following: When I think about my dad, there are 5 definite descriptions that come to mind~~Loyalty, consistency, respect, pride and hope. My dad was

very loyal in the sense that he provided for our family in a way that I can appreciate, as he worked hard from dawn to dusk and didn't quit when things got tough. Not only loyal to us as a family, he was loyal to the livestock, as he never allowed neglect of them in any way, aside from the few times he would have to teach them a lesson with the front end of the pickup when chasing them into the yard. Dad always taught me that they came first, without them we couldn't make ends meet. He was very loyal to his neighbors and friends, if he said he would do something, there was no question to whether or not it would be done, he was all about follow through. And if he told us kids to do something, he expected that it be done, done right ...and not to take all day!!! He would say, "If you're going to do it~~Do it right the first time!!" Loyalty to my mom's family was something that I as a kid felt and lived. Dad has always kept a close relationship with all my mom's siblings and they have always had a huge impact on my life too. Dad was consistent, very consistent!!! Meals were on the table at a certain time, chores were done at the regular times, and we didn't do things if they were not scheduled in. I remember him teaching my boys how to feed their 4-H steers and how consistency was the key to a properly raised steer. My boys all followed this plan and consistently produced Steer of Merit beef and lamb. Taylon constantly worried about his animals, that they get fed in time and that they have shelter. I believe this animal husbandry of his grandfather has influenced Taylon, and his compassion for livestock is a reflection of his grandfather. I remember as a young girl, doing chores and thinking "Oh, I won't push up hay today", then I would end up turning around and pushing up hay, thinking "what if a cow died? It would be my fault" This is the consistency and loyalty I learned from him. As time passed and dad was a "foreman" on the farm for my brother, his consistency went more to a schedule on a social level. It was Monday and Wednesday to Glendive, Tuesday and Fridays to Richey and Thursday and Saturdays to Lindsay. And these days were very much set in stone as this was his time with his "family of friends" including people like Freddie Lee, Ronnie Wold, JP and

George Winhofer, just to name a few. Dad would always call me in the mornings and ask me why I didn't tell him about someone passing away, or someone who had had an accident, or who was building something new. I'd tell him, I didn't know and he would reply, "well,, if you would go have a few beers, you would learn something." One last story about consistency and schedule~~I had come home drunk one night, or I should say early morning about 4:45, and dad yelled up the stairs at 5:30 to get up. He had bale stacking on the schedule, and I was his stacker!! Well, in no physical condition to be in the 101 degree heat they were calling for, or upon a stack, I followed my dad to the field and he lifted me up in the bucket to the top of the stack. After about an hour of stacking, I blacked out and toppled off the stack. When I came to, I thought I would get to head to the house, but NO, not so much~~he scooped me back up, along side of the stook of bales he has retrieved and hoisted me back on top of the stack~~~if this wasn't consistency, well I wouldn't have ever learned it. Respect was something installed in me at a very, very young age. You just knew you were expected to respect your mother, respect your elders, respect the livestock and respect the land. His size 11 boot was a common fit on my rear, as throughout life, if I didn't pick up a rusty nail or staple, or pitch the cow shit out the door from a milkcow, or forgot to shut off the pump, or sassed my mom.....I felt it!!! I remember forgetting to lock the barn door up tight one night, and animals got into the feed, and that was a very LONG week, as I received the whoopin' then got the silent treatment he could give so well. I hated to drive, and one day I was going to load speltz to feed our sheep, and I ran into the granary building. I pondered for a half hour about how I was going to tell him, even thought he might not even notice~~it was very noticeable, so I said " Dad, do you care if I ran into the granary, just a little bit???" He reminded me of this still just 3 weeks ago. He didn't forget much. Waste was not an option for my dad either, as he reused anything he could on the farm and I dreading pulling nails, straightening nails to reuse them and many times wanting to toss the dang things, so not to have to deal with them. I was dad's chore girl, and at

the time, it was a thorn in my britches that he made me do the work of my sister's and of mine, yet today I look back and realize the quality of respect he taught me of people, livestock and the land. I thank him for that!! Dad took pride in about everything he ever did in life. When I was young, he was so proud of our grades in school, our accomplishments of learning, even if it was HIS version of nursery rhymes. It was rather sad that he would scold us for cussing, but teach us such naughty ditties!!! We didn't know any better, and to this day, not a day goes by that one of the dang chants doesn't filter through my thoughts!! HOPE~~when I speak of my dad and hope, I hold dear his hope of watching his grand- daughter Maria drive in the Bump and Run racing, hope of his grandson Taylon fulfilling his dream to have a stable for the handicap, hope of seeing all his family happy and content, even if he had that instigation notion to him. He talked to me about all these things in the past 2 months, and stressed to me how important it is to push for what I want in life and not to allow obstacles or people to take away my happiness. One of our last conversations we had soon before we had headed to Mayo, was Jalee's eyes, and how he sure hopes that they find a way to restore her sight. Jalee and I traveled many miles in the last 3 years with Pops for doctor appointments of his and he showed such patience and caring for her stating "There's no hurry, is their Jalee? Time goes by fast enough." He has stolen a piece of this little girl's heart and she will carry dad's love for her with her forever. I have never seen dad comfortable around anyone with a disability until Freddie's grandson and Jalee. He spoke of Landon so highly and had high respect and hope for this young man also. Dad Loved me, this I know~~growing up, I often questioned it, often refused to believe it as it took me 40 years to have an adult close relationship with him. He was all about doing what you want, not worrying about things we can't control, and he always had the attitude of "they'll either get over it or die mad!!" I wish I could take out a jigsaw puzzle and put it together with him today, go on one of our never forgotten 'daddy-daughter dates, trot out to the barn and milk a few cows, just to swing the pails of milk in a complete circular motion over my

head like he showed me, or maybe just go for a drive and find a pheasant to shoot~~I treasure the last 5 years that my dad and I have spent endless hours in the outdoors, mostly talking but also put a lot of lead in the ground too. He always said "If you don't get one in em', you can't slow em' down." I wish I could set at his kitchen table and have a pot or 2 of coffee with him or take him some chocolate chip cookies, but for now I will savor the memories and sip his love, knowing it will help me to move forward. I see my dad in my brother, and in each of the lives of my boys, this may be God's way of keeping dad close. And I know feel a sense of pride when people say "You sound just like your father." "Well.....thank you, that just might be the nicest compliment anyone has given me" I will say. I know his love will be felt by everyone that walks on the farm. As I sat in the hospital with him during his last days here on earth, many things came to my mind, I discussed so much with him ~~~and he must have agreed, cuz he didn't say much in return, just looked at me or uttered a soft sound. The last 3 week together has taught me everything about this man and aside from having all his lady friends (yes~~Renee and Cindy, I recall your names on that list), be his pallbearers, I will say my promises, made to him have been kept. Everyone here today is a piece of dad's personal jigsaw puzzle, so now we have it put together and complete. To all of you who have had an opportunity to know my dad, you had to have learned something from him, he wouldn't have let you get away without, but, if you didn't know him personally, you will get a picture of who he truly was, by the stories shared today. He was a man of extra-ordinary character, a man of loyalty, consistency, respect, pride and hope. Probably not in the same sense or definition as you know them, but in the Ray A. Zimdars' way.

# Tribute Wall



“ *Ray Zimdars*

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December 07, 2022 at 04:10 PM