



THE RIO BLANCO COUNTY PIONEERS ASSOCIATION
proudly confers the
Spirit of the Pioneers Award
Posthumously upon
Connie Marie Theos

April 14, 1945–Oct. 11, 2020

The Spirit of the Pioneers Award was created for the purpose of honoring those hardy and determined individuals and families who exemplify long-term servant leadership representative of the early day pioneers who travelled in challenging, trying adversity to ultimately settle in the White River Valley. Their proud legacy lives on in the pioneer descendants; some of whose families have remained continuously throughout many generations in Rio Blanco County.

Connie served as Co-President for the RBC Pioneers Association 100th anniversary Centennial Celebration in 2012 with Co-President Mary Ann Wilber. After this spectacular event she was elected RBCPA Treasurer and served faithfully in that role until her passing in 2020. Under her servant leadership the RBCPA grew and flourished each year and maintained popularity among community members. She actively recruited younger community members to participate in RBCPA. Her favorite slogan for RBCPA was "Not many parties last over 100 years..."

Connie's younger sister Renae shared remembrances: "Our mother always said you do not want to have a baby or die in the Spring if you are married to a rancher. Well she had Connie on April 14, 1945, our dad of course could not come as he was busy lambing sheep. Our Grandfather Parr took our mother to Hayden where Connie was born. Connie was always proud of being born in the hospital in Hayden that to this day is still standing. In 2001 she returned to Meeker and started helping out on the ranch. She loved trailing sheep down the highway and enjoyed telling travelers who would stop about our way of life. After moving back home she became very involved in the local and state Woolgrowers, the local Cattlewomen's, helped with Sheep Dog Trials and took my mothers role and passion for the Old Timers association. As many of you know if you gave her a task she gave it 120%. She passed peacefully at home on Oct. 11, 2020. From the day she was born she was taught the value of hard work and dedication to the ranching way of life. The snowstorm in April that year required her father to stay with the sheep and not see her until she was 10 days old."

She loved the ranch and some of her fondest memories from her childhood were on the ranch. She loved riding her horse, Dixie, going with her dad on the sleigh with the team of horses to feed, and spending time with her friends and cousins. She loved the outdoors and her happy place was with the sheep, horses and dogs.

Connie was a fine musician, playing trumpet in Marching and Symphonic band and singing for the Golden Tones Dance band at Meeker High School. After graduating, she spent a year at CU in Boulder before moving to California and then Arizona. During her time in Arizona she became an active member of her community and acquired many lifelong friends. She had a very successful horse breeding operation and loved spending time with her horses on the racetrack along with a successful driver training school.

In 2001 she moved back to Meeker and began working on the ranch again with her father. She loved being back on the ranch and worked to promote the sheep industry. Connie was active in the Colorado "Stop the Wolf" campaign to keep Canadian Gray Wolves out of Colorado to prevent depredation of livestock and wild game animals. Connie was very active in historic preservation attempting to save the old classic Meeker Elementary School from being demolished to build a jail.

Connie has one sister Renae Neilson. She always said, "it was quite a shock after several years to not be the only child, but I adjusted and got her horseback at an early age." Connie had an unconditional love for her three nieces, as well as her great-nephew Jace and great-niece Mollee. Martin Inda "her better half" was her best friend. Her other loves included her horses, sheep, dogs, and all of her cousins and extended family.

She leaves behind Martin Inda, Renae and Paul Neilson (sister and brother-in-law); Kelcee, Ryan, Jace and Mollee Vroman (niece and family); Morgan and Kelsey Pfeiffer (niece and husband); Taylor Neilson (niece); along with her extended family and many friends.

Connie loved life and lived the life she loved.

The RBCPA is honored to recognize Connie Marie Theos for her distinguished service to youth as an educator, historian, and community servant leader, and for special contributions to the citizens of Rio Blanco County, State of Colorado and Nation. She was a humble, significant member of our Rio Blanco County community and will forever remain an icon and a legacy of its history.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal this Twentieth Day of August 2022
Sam Love
Sam Love, President, RBCPA