

Fair premium book dedicated to Tim and Kathy Rankin

By Merlyn Robinson

This year's premium book dedication honors Kathy and Tim Rankin, loyal fair, rodeo and 4-H supporters. The Rankins didn't grow up locally but, since 1978 when they moved here from the Willamette Valley, they have become involved Morrow County residents.

In appreciation for the lifestyle of this area, Tim says, "It's like a need to earn the right to live here." Consequently they have wholeheartedly embraced and supported community events.

Tim first fell in love with this area as a youngster while hunting here locally with his father and Carl McDaniel. The Rankins were married in 1974 and they began searching for a spot in Morrow County to put down roots. Influenced by friends and a love of the mountains, they obtained timbered property at the edge of the Blue Mountains that once belonged to Tom Huston.

There wasn't any development on this property, so Kathy was unaware of the pioneering adventure in which she would participate. For living accommodations, they acquired a modest single-wide mobile trailer. With their first-born daughter in diapers, reality set in during their first harsh winter in the mountains. Tim was working at the Kinzua Mill when the water and drain lines froze at home. Warm fires heated the center of the rooms at 80 degrees, Tim says, but ice formed on the inside of the single windows. Each day, Tim brought home containers of water from town and they struggled to survive even when their private road became packed with three feet of snow. Kathy says she felt terribly isolated since they had no telephone and she longed to move back to the valley.

Tim asked Kathy to stick it out for one year and said if she still felt that way then they would return to Oregon's more moderate climate. With the return of sunny, warm weather, the mountain magic cast a spell on Kathy and 23 years of hard work have produced improvements such as a large shop and outbuildings to accommodate livestock. They purchased a modern double-wide mobile home in 1993 and placed it over a full basement as a permanent home. Tim cut the timbers and built a front deck off of the main floor that offers a panoramic view of the forest. That deck shelters a ground floor entrance of the daylight basement.

It's there that they raised three



Tim and Kathy Rankin

daughters: Jennifer, 23, Bobbie, 20, and Tracy, 18, who inherited their parents' love of horses. Kathy and Tim both rode horses while growing up. Tim participated in 4-H and riding club events. They continue to love rodeo and horse-related events. Tim jests that their horse-acquiring daughters are responsible for adding to their small herd.

Starting when Jennifer was in the fourth grade, all three girls have been active in horse and sheep 4-H projects. This major family focus is something the whole family has enjoyed, says Tim. So whenever there was a workday, a 4-H event, workers needed for the 4-H snack shack or volunteer labor during the construction of the Wilkinson Arena, the Rankins have been there to help. Tim also built sheep stands for fair time use. Besides helping at horse shows, they also have always been willing workers at the Wrangler cowboy breakfasts.

Tim has worked for the Morrow County Road Department since 1980 and Kathy has been employed with the Forest Service since 1989. The Rankins have taken their vacation days during fair and rodeo week; living on the fairgrounds in order to help their girls as well as assist with many activities.

Beginning when Bobbie first became a rodeo court pennant bearer in 1994, the family has been involved in promoting the fair and rodeo. Thousands of miles were logged on their pickups and horse trailers. In addition to serving as permanent pennant bearers, Bobbie was a princess in 1998 and queen in 1999. Tracy was a princess in 1999 and queen in 2000. Kathy served as court chaperon in 2000.

"Fair, Rodeo and 4-H have provided an enjoyable family-oriented experience," says Kathy. "It's given us the opportunity to do things with our girls." By coordinating those activities with other families, the Rankins say they are pleased to have formed many lasting friendships that they continue to enjoy.

The Rankins emphasize that the Morrow County Fair and Rodeo are important community events. They say these events provide character-building opportunities for youngsters that result in lasting memories, as illustrated in the Rankin family photos, scrapbooks and memorabilia. Their daughters, who are now attending college, have greatly benefited from this type of background, they say. Along with successfully earning many ribbons and awards, the girls learned to take their lumps at an early age when it came to mutton busting, calf riding or uncooperative fair animals.

Tim and Kathy represent the many people who continue to donate their efforts to the continuance of these local events. This premium book is dedicated to these two staunch fair and rodeo supporters, who proudly call Morrow County their home.

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Raymond French, 2001 grand marshal



Raymond French

Dedication, involvement and service are words that describe this year's grand marshal of the 2001 Fair and Oregon Trail Pro Rodeo. This honor is one more title Raymond "Ray" French can add to his many accomplishments in our community.

Ray was born and raised on the family ranch on Big Butter Creek. One of his first commitments started with his marriage to his wife Norma in 1946. The couple had three daughters, Karen, Verina and Susan. Ray and Norma presently have nine grandchildren who live in different parts of the country with their parents. Karen Wood lives in Tigard; Verina Schiller, the 1967 Heppner rodeo queen, lives in Pflugerville, Texas; and Susan Ward, the 1972 queen, lives in Heppner. Susan and her husband, Jim Ward currently run the family ranch.

Ray began his service and dedication to Morrow County in the 1950s and 60s. He served as chairman of the Morrow County

Livestock grower. He was a member of the Heppner Soil and Water Conservation District for 16 years and served as chairman for 12 years. In 1964 he served in this position while he was also a director of the National Cattlemen's Association. His dedication and service to the livestock industry earned him an honored award of "Distinguished, Service, Devotion and Loyalty" by Oregon State University. In 1985 he was elected as a state representative for District 59 and served in this position until 1989.

The 90's brought Ray's experience and skills back to his community. He was elected as Morrow County Commissioner for two terms, starting in 1992. Over the years, Ray has been a member of the American Legion, Heppner Coordinating Council, the Heppner's Elk Lodge and the board of trustees, Heppner school board, chairman of the Columbia Blue Mountain Resource and Conservation Development Association, director of the Pendleton Production Credit Bank, a member of Heppner's Chamber of Commerce and a member of the St. Patrick's Church. His dedicated service to our community was awarded in 1997 with the Lifetime Achievement Award presented by the Heppner Chamber of Commerce. The 90's concluded with Ray's retirement in 1999.

"The Morrow County Fair and Oregon Trail Pro Rodeo is honored to have Ray French as this year's grand marshal. His dedication, service and commitment to Morrow County have had a huge impact on our local economy and way of life. Ray's involvement in our community will have a lasting impact for those who call Morrow County home."

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