

Sweeney family grand marshalls of 2009 Heppner St. Patrick's Day Celebration

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operated the Model Billiards hall in Helena. Cornelius received a land grant from the railroad and started a ranch near Winston, MT.

Patrick Michael was a stone contractor in Helena. While building his ranch, Cornelius worked with Patrick on many early Helena buildings. Patrick Michael and Mary had three children, Patrick Jerome, James and Charles. Patrick Michael was very active in the Catholic Knights of America, having been a founding member of the Helena branch. Patrick Michael died after a wagon accident in 1892 while helping build a Catholic church in Helena. Cornelius then helped raise Patrick Michael's children on the ranch near Winston. Many relatives still remain in Montana.

Pat's grandfather, Dr. Patrick Jerome Sweeney, left the Sweeney ranch in Winston in 1910 to attend the Montana School of Mines. He then went to Chicago where he graduated from the Loyola College of Dentistry. He returned to Montana and opened a dental practice in Butte in 1917. He spent many years on the Montana State Board of Dental Examiners. He was active in political affairs and was appointed to the first Montana State Parks Commission in 1935. His lifelong interest in mining continued and he was involved in various mining interests including White's

Gulch and the Sweeney-Hopkins mine in Superior, MT. He moved his dental practice to Red Lodge, MT in 1920. He then relocated to Fort Benton in 1929. Following his retirement in Fort Benton in 1953, he moved to Whitefish Lake. In 1965 he moved to Heppner to be closer to his family. He passed away in 1969 and is buried in Heppner Masonic Cemetery.

Pat's father, Jerome "Jerry," was born at Red Lodge in 1923. He missed being named Patrick because an older sibling had already been given the name. Jerome joined the Army in 1941 and fought with the 101st infantry division. He was wounded on the front lines in Germany. Upon returning to Montana, he met an Army nurse at the Fort Harrison Veteran's Hospital, Olive Virginia "Tiny" Harris. They married in 1948 in Butte, MT.

Jerome worked as funeral director in Butte, MT for many years before moving to Oregon in 1958. The family lived in Ontario and Grants Pass before purchasing the mortuary in Heppner in 1964.

Jerome served for many years as mayor of Heppner, as well as on the city council and planning commission. He retired in 1982 and moved to Portland. He passed away in 1990. Tiny Sweeney was a Morrow County Public Health nurse for a number of years.

She passed away in 1975. They are both buried in Heppner Masonic Cemetery.

Pat was one of six children. Michael J., who passed away September 20, 2008, was born in Chicago while Jerome was attending Mortuary College there. Patrick W., Kathleen Ann, and Daniel Joseph were all born in Butte, MT, and Brian and Gregory were born in Oregon. Kathleen, Daniel, Brian and Gregory now reside in the Portland area.

Pat followed in his father's footsteps as a funeral director, purchasing the mortuary in Condon in 1978, and later purchasing the Heppner mortuary from his father in 1981. He and his wife, Trisha, currently run both mortuaries under the name Sweeney Mortuary.

Pat and Trisha have four children: Corey Patrick and his wife Brandi, Nicole Coe and her husband Scott, Cameron Ryan and his wife Stefanie, and Brooke Marie, all of Heppner. They also have four grandchildren, Kane Patrick and Jorden Michael Sweeney, and Drew Matthew and Jace Ryan Coe.

Pat enjoys collecting Heppner memorabilia. He has numerous items from before, during and after the flood. Along with a great sense of humor, the "fishin' mortician" loves steelhead fishing. But more than these hobbies, Pat loves his grandkids. "They are what make me breathe," he said.

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