

Rancher Deloss Wilder dies at 96

Sentinel staff report

Deloss R. Wilder, the third of five generations to be raised on the Wilder Ranch on the North Coast, died Tuesday at a local convalescent hospital. He was 96.

Mr. Wilder, known as Dee, was a prominent rancher and life-long sportsman. He also had a career of community service, serving on the county Board of Supervisors during World War II.

Mr. Wilder was born at the Wilder Ranch, now known as Wilder Ranch State Park, on Jan. 2, 1900. He drove himself by horse and wagon to Bay View School and boasted that he was never late one day. He was a member of the Santa Cruz High School Class of 1919, the first class to start and finish in the present building on Walnut Avenue. Mr. Wilder later attended UC Berkeley and UC Davis.

In 1921, he married Jean Williamson, his high-school sweetheart, at her parents' Ocean View Avenue home. Following school, the young couple returned to the Wilder Ranch, where Mr. Wilder joined his father in the dairy business.

Later, in 1937, the dairy would be replaced by the raising of beef cattle. Mr. Wilder began breeding purebred quarter horses in 1933 and joined the Rodeo Cowboys Association. He rode competitively and showed his horses for many years and won numerous prizes, including the top cowhorse honors in the 1952 Salinas Rodeo.

He was scoutmaster of Rotary Troop No. 66 for 24 years and took great pride in his 12 Eagle



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In 1944, Gov. Earl Warren appointed Mr. Wilder to the county Board of Supervisors, representing the Seaside District. He also served on county grand juries and was a member of the county Rationing Board and the county Probation Committee.

He was a 50-year member of the Santa Cruz

Masonic Lodge No. 38 and had been a member of the Santa Cruz Rotary Club since 1932. In 1981, the Santa Cruz Oldtimers named him Old-timer of the Year.

Mr. Wilder was an avid sportsman and was never happier than when he was sitting in a duck blind in the early morning, on a Northern California trout stream or training his hunting dogs.

In 1937, he joined the Gustine Gun Club, where he hunted ducks for 50 years with his son, D.D., who is still a club member.

Mr. Wilder, affectionately known as "Pop Pop" to his family, is survived by his son and daughter-in-law, Deloss D. and Barbara Wilder; his granddaughters and their husbands, Sandi and Al McCommon Jr. and Janet and Bob Lockwood, all of Santa Cruz; great-grandchildren Scott McCommon of Redwood City, Lauren McCommon of San Francisco, Craig Lockwood and Kelly Busenhardt and her husband, Chris, all of Santa Cruz; and several nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his son, William, in 1963, and Jean, his beloved wife of 74 years, in 1995.

At Mr. Wilder's request, no services are planned. Remembrances may be sent to the Sigma Alpha of Omega Nu Endowment Fund, P.O. Box 1696, Santa Cruz, Calif. 95061; the Boys and Girls Club of Santa Cruz, 543 Center St., Santa Cruz, Calif. 95060; or Rotary Club of Santa Cruz, P.O. Box 497, Santa Cruz, Calif. 95061.