

# Dennis Otto Heitman, Sr.

February 23, 1926 ~ June 15, 2020



Dennis Otto Heitman, Sr., 94, a Carson Valley, Nevada native, passed away at home in Caldwell, Idaho, on June 15, 2020, with his daughter Lana, granddaughter Wendy and her husband Kevin Domenighini by his side.

Dennis was born on February 23, 1926, to Dorothy (Neddenriep) and Otto Heitman at their beautiful Carson Valley ranch on Foothill Road at the base of Jobs Peak. He was the middle child. His older sister Zelda and her husband Jac have passed. He is survived by his younger brother Bob Heitman and wife Claudette, who reside in Spokane, Washington. When their Father, Otto, was tragically killed in Elko in 1935, the three children along with their mother, kept the Heitman Ranch running through the depression years. Later, Dorothy married Henry Berrum welcoming two siblings to the family: Nevalyn (Jim) Miller and Bud (Phyllis) Berrum. Dennis graduated from Douglas County High School, with 4 years of football and basketball along with 4-H awards for beef and hogs.

In 1945, Dennis married Jere Campbell, of Genoa. That same year, Dennis was the first Nevadan awarded the Future Farmers of America "Star Farmer" of the Pacific region from 25,000 participants, and the national "Top Farmer" Degree at ceremonies he and Jere attended in Kansas City. In 1947, Dennis, Jr was born, then Lana in 1950 and Margaret in 1951. The extended family included Jere's siblings and their children: Bill (Sylvia) Campbell, Gus (Margaret) Campbell, Ellen (Harlon) Cook, Betty (Mervin) Hawkins, Jim Campbell and of course, Pat (Neal) Feticc, who was Jere's identical twin sister. What wonderful memories all the "cousins" have from riding horses, branding cattle, swimming in the pool, camping at Hope Valley and learning to cook and entertain at the large holiday and birthday gatherings at the ranch.



In 1963, Dennis, Jere and the kids, along with sister Pat and Neal Feticc and their kids, brother Jim Campbell and Gramps Gene Feticc, moved to Willow Creek Ranch in Orovada where the combined families raucously lived together in one house along with often visiting relatives and friends!

After ranching for many years, Dennis and Jere retired to Idaho, raising a few cattle and horses and enjoying grandchildren visits at their homes in Parma, McCall, Eagle and then Meridian. Dennis leaves a long legacy of teaching all the kids his proud work ethic, to ride a horse, catch a fish, put up fence, and tell a good story about the long history of his family in Nevada. Dennis will be buried at the family plot in Gardnerville, Nevada, next to his wife Jere and their son Dennis Otto Heitman, Jr.

Dennis is survived by his daughters, their spouses and families: Lana and Jeff Servatius of Eagle, Idaho, and Margie and Rob Wonhof of Reno, Nevada and Denny's family. "Papa" was so proud of his numerous grandchildren, great grandchildren, and great-great grandchildren. And he was affectionately known as "Uncle Dennis" to many nieces, nephews, cousins and friends. He is also survived by his long-time companion, Melba Fisher of Meridian, Idaho, her family and their many friends. They were members of the Meridian United Methodist Church of the Warm Heart. Dennis was a lifelong cowboy and rancher -- he never left the house without a clean shave, his boots and Stetson. He most enjoyed riding horses and working cattle, rodeos, horse racing, cattle auctions, cards and a whiskey with friends and family. He was a remarkable, kind and loving man -- his cowboy stories and love of family will live on as his legacy.

*The Heitman family "Courting Buggy", donated by Dennis and Jere, is now on display at the Carson Valley Museum's new Edwin L Wiegand Ranching and Agricultural Heritage Exhibit. Circa 1875, the buggy was owned by Dennis's Grandparents Louis (who migrated from Germany in 1872 at 13 years of age) and Anna Heitman. Please visit the Museum and afterwards have a Picon at the JT, where a hat in his memory hangs on the wall. Donations to the Museum in Dennis's honor will be used to acquire a horse replica and other items to add to the buggy display. (Douglas County Historical Society, Carson Valley Museum, at 1477 US Highway 395 N, Suite B, Gardnerville, NV 89410.) To see photos and add tributes go to Dennis's memorial web page at [www.DennisHeitman.com](http://www.DennisHeitman.com)*

