

Bill Dowless

After graduating from Gold Hill High School in 1950, Bill attended auctioneering school in Indiana. He returned to the Gold Hill/Medford area to begin his career as an auctioneer. Bill sold at various auction yards throughout Southern Oregon. In 1959, he and his father, Carl Dowless, purchased the Corvallis Auction Yard which they operated until 1972. Bill also sold the annual Benton County Fair's 4-H and FFA livestock auction from 1959 until his passing in 1997.

Bill and lifelong friend Rich Guerber were leaders of the Junior Stockmen 4-H club for many years. Working alongside Rich and fellow auctioneer John Hanger, Bill enjoyed the art of working the crowd to get the best bid he could for the 4-H member. The three of them would joke and banter back and forth, causing eruptions of laughter from the crowd and the bidding would grow. Although Bill had the pleasure of selling thousands of 4-H animals, he always took pride when one of his family members was in his sale ring. Since Bill's passing, John Hanger has returned to sell many Benton County Fair's 4-H and FFA livestock auctions to continue the traditions he started with Bill.

Bill and his wife Betty were active supporters of the Benton County livestock 4-H and FFA programs. Children, grandchildren and great grandchildren of Bill and Betty have been active in 4-H. The Bill Dowless Livestock Pavilion was built in 1998, connecting the sheep and swine barns together to create an additional covered space for all at the Benton County Fair to enjoy. Much of the Dowless family are still active members of the Benton County 4-H programs as leaders, 4-H members, and volunteers at the annual livestock auction. Bill is deeply loved and missed by his family, yet his spirit lives on every Saturday night of the Benton County Fair.

