



## Harry Wayne McGillen

February 18, 1942 - September 19, 2023

The world lost a true ol' cowboy today. Harry Wayne McGillen passed away on September 19, after a courageous battle with cancer. He was born in Butte on February 18, 1942, to Betty (Kurtz) and Harry McGillen. He was the oldest of three boys raised in Centerville.

Wayne graduated from Butte High School in 1960. He joined the Marines after high school and served two years active duty/Marine Reserves. In 1966 he married Margie Richter, and they enjoyed 57 years of marriage.

Wayne was a jack of all trades and a born salesman. He had more jobs than we can remember. As a teenager, he set pins in local bowling alleys where he set two lanes at once. He was a bellhop/elevator operator at the Leggat Hotel in uptown Butte. Working in the harshest conditions on the Tina and Lester Else ranch in the Big Hole Valley was one of his toughest jobs. He worked in the Badger mine as did his uncle, father, and grandfather, and he also worked in the Anaconda Smelter. He was a meat cutter at Safeway and started the original Meat Block in the old fox farm butcher shed in his front yard. He worked for years at Whalen Tire, drove school bus (kicking many a troublemaker off his bus to walk home), worked road construction (where he could drive just about any piece of equipment), worked the crushers at the gold mills in Pony and Rochester Basin, and sold cars at Monty White Subaru. He owned a couple of businesses: High RPM Excavating (Richter, Palmer, McGillen) with his father-in-law and brother-in-law which they started with an old backhoe, and he also briefly owned a tire store. He retired from one of his

favorite jobs as an engineer at Greely and Hillcrest for the Butte School District. He loved getting to know all of the kids and staff. Wayne was a gifted salesman and continued buying, selling, and trading horses, vehicles, tractors, etc. right up to his death.

Wayne enjoyed many activities such as horseback riding, attending auctions, snowmobiling, dirt bike riding, side-by-siding (rain, shine, or snow), traveling with family/friends, dancing his and Margie's unique western two-step, attending rodeos, reading westerns, listening to country western music, attending his kids and grandkids activities, being in a tractor club, raising horses, workhorses, and paints, teaching his grandkids life lessons, sharing his adventures and stories of his adventures, and enjoying the beauty of a "purty" day. He loved spending time with his family and had many "outstanding" friends too numerous to list.

Wayne never met a stranger. If he did not know someone, he could usually find a distant relative he knew. If going back several generations didn't make the connection, he made them a new friend. He still had friends from high school, had many old friends/cowboys precede him in death, and had numerous horseback, UTV, and auction buddies til the end.

Wayne was a real cowboy of a bygone era. He taught himself how to ride by putting a bridle on any horse he found wandering North of Walkerville and riding it bareback. He could ride any horse, raced horses with chariots, and could drive a 4-horse team and wagon. We are not saying he was never bucked off; he was bucked off quite a few times, but he always got back on. He also had a livestock selling license for over 50 years.

Wayne is survived by his wife Margie and his four kids and their spouses: Jodi and John Neary, Greg and Natalie McGillen, Janeen and Dan Walsh, and Steve and Darlene McGillen. He is survived by 12 grandkids: Colton (Nichole) and Rhys (Crystal) Neary; Candice, Wyatt (Mitra), Ethan (Athena), and Kaden McGillen, Megan and Zach (Nicole) Rogers; Cortney and Riley Walsh; and Marc and Molly McGillen. He is survived by 6 great-grandkids: Marlie, Sailor, Henry, Marcus, Keegan, and Zuriyah. He is also survived by his two brothers

Dale (Joanna) and Paul (Linda), his sisters-in-law Jane O'Connell and Connie Palmer, and numerous nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents, mother and father-in-law, Ellen and Rudy Richter, brother-in-law Ray Palmer, grandson Justin Rogers, and nephew Mike Leutschaft.

Wayne was a one-of-a-kind man who lived life to the fullest on his terms. He was a rebel when he was younger, a generous friend to all, and the best dad and Grandpa/Papa/Pops ever. We could always count on him to be there for us. The world is a little less colorful without Wayne in it. As per Wayne's request, there will be no service.

# Tribute Wall

IS

“ *Sending thoughts and prayers to the family during this most difficult time*

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**IUOE Local 400 Board, Member and Staff** - September 25, 2023 at 05:03 PM

BM

“ *I will always cherish the memories I had with Wayne on our rides to mountain lakes, he was always a joy to be around and was such a great person, we're going to miss you on our rides but we know you'll be watching over us, rest easy Wayne, till we meet again*

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**Brendan Maloney** - September 25, 2023 at 07:27 AM

TE

*Beautiful sentiment and so true, Teresa*

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**teresa** - September 25, 2023 at 09:39 PM

TE

“ *I only met you one time but I'll remember you for life; you'll always be a great man. Teresa Mielke*

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**teresa** - September 24, 2023 at 03:15 PM

PM

“ I met Wayne 25 years ago as we both shared a love of horses and an insatiable appetite for adventure. We hit it off immediately and began our weekly horse back trips to one of the hundreds of mountain lakes in the area. We spent over twenty years taking kids, grandkids and friends on these excursions and were able to watch our grandchildren grow up on horseback. I'll cherish forever my trips with Wayne from the Grand Canyon to the white water adventure on the Snake river. It seems that wherever we went Wayne had friends and made new ones. Wayne was always there for anyone who needed a helping hand, he was generous to a fault and never turned down anyone. Wayne was a lot of things but mostly he was my friend and I will miss him greatly. There will never be another, God speed , until we meet again.

*Pat Maloney*

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**Pat Maloney** - September 24, 2023 at 11:41 AM

MT

“ Wayne was a great friend and mentor. He gave me my first job, working for him at Whalens tire on Montana St. I learned a lot from him, but mostly to have a great work ethic and to treat others right and pay attention to detail. I learned to drive just about any vehicle there was because of him. There were countless cars parked on the corner of the lot that he had for sale. Even a hearse!!!

To say that Wayne was a hard worker would be an understatement. He was mu h more than that. Even today I'm grateful for that summer I worked for him. The values he taught me still I pass on even today.

To Marge and family, I'm sorry for Wayne's passing . Butte and the world are smaller places now that he's gone, he left them better places. I know he's in heaven with my dad telling stories, and sharing a joke or two.

May he rest in Peace, May his memory be a blessing.

*Mudge Tamietti, MSgt, USAF, Retired.*

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**Mudge Tamietti** - September 23, 2023 at 08:43 AM