



## Ralls C. Jones

November 5, 1928 - November 28, 2017

Punch Jones, longtime Lea County cattle and sheep rancher (with a passion for race horses) rejoined the love of his life and wife of 62 years, Suzanne, and his beloved daughter, Michelle, on November 28, 2017, following a short illness at the age of 89 years.

Born on November 5, 1928 to Amos Dee Jones and Portia Jones, Punch spent his early years splitting time between schooling in Roswell and working on the Jones Ranch west of Tatum. Born Ralls C. Jones, his name “Punch” was given to him by his father as a shorten version of “cow puncher”. He quickly developed a reputation for hard work, honesty and a firm hand shake. These attributes earned him the respect of not only his peers, but also generations which have followed.

A graduate of Roswell High School, Punch attended New Mexico State University to study animal husbandry where he helped organize the NMSU rodeo association. Being shortly after the war, he went home to assist his mother with the management of the ranch in an effort to keep troops supplied with beef and lamb.

In 1950, Punch traveled with his mother to Australia for several months to study the sheep and livestock industry. While in Australia, he was the subject of a full blown article in the Australia version of Glamour magazine, in which the writer described Punch as a younger version of Gary Cooper (for the younger generation, a famous movie star of the time) with his western attire and gentlemanly demeanor.

Punch then returned to New Mexico to further the development of the Debouillet breed of sheep, which is known for high quality wool. His efforts led to the official recognition of the breed by the United States Department of Agriculture in 1954. It is the only breed of sheep recognized by the USDA as originating in the United States.

While attending college, Punch saw his first match race and was hooked for life. He then hauled a load of broom-tailed, rough broke ranch horses to the livestock auction, which netted him a total of \$12. When asked why he made such a foolish move, he stated "I wanted to buy a race horse". His initial efforts to get into the race horse business were not entirely successful.

In 1952, Punch met his mate for life, Suzanne Norton Jones, an internationally renowned equestrian. They married in 1954. Along with Suzanne came a young mare named Maroon. Maroon was highly successful, both at the race track and as a producer. She served as Punch's foundation mare. Punch remained in the race horse business until his passing. Maroon will be inducted into the American Quarter Horse Association Hall of Fame in 2018.

Known as a horseman's horseman, a cattleman's cattleman, sheepman's sheepman, and a true gentleman, Punch received numerous honors and served on numerous boards. He was inducted into the American Quarter Horse Association Hall of Fame, along with his wife, Suzanne, the Lea County Cowboy Hall of Fame and the Ruidoso Downs Racehorse Hall of Fame, to mention a few. He was also honored as the New Mexico Sheepman of the Year, New Mexico Horsebreeder of the Year and was honored in 2000 with the first Annual Southwest Cowboy Celebration, which highlighted the A.D. Jones Ranch's contribution to the culture of the Southwest. While he received many accolades and awards, his greatest pride was . . . his family.

Punch is survived by his daughter, Debbie Jones, also of Tatum, and his sons, Clabe Jones (and his wife, Vanda) of Joseph, Utah and Dirk Jones (and his wife, Tricia) of Roswell. He is also survived by Aja Palmer, Beverly Heird Flores, Josh Heird, Levie Jones, Portia Jones, Rebekah Jones, Chaundra Jones, July Jones, and Tara Jones, his grandchildren; and, Alex Flores,

Joshua Flores, Jack Flores, Kason Fitzgerald, Korina Jones and Analyse Jones, his great-grandchildren. Preceding his passing were his parents, Dee and Portia Jones, his siblings, Ladye Dee Remmele, Mary Helen Skeen, Amos Dixon Jones and Dorothy Jones, his daughter Michelle Jones Palmer, and granddaughter Nisha Hood.

A celebration of Punch's life will be held on December 15, 2017 at Christ's Church, 2200 N. Sycamore, Roswell, New Mexico. All are invited to a cowboy lunch starting at 11:30 a.m., followed by services at 1:00 p.m. and interment at South Park Cemetery. Viewing will be available at Anderson Bethany Funeral Home from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m., December 14, 2017.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to either the Ruidoso Downs Racetrack Chapel (building fund), c/o Chaplain Darrell Winter, PO Box 449, Ruidoso Downs, New Mexico 88346 or Lea County Cowboy Hall of Fame, Thunderbird Circle, Hobbs, New Mexico 88240.

Celebrate Punch's life by visiting [www.andersonbethany.com](http://www.andersonbethany.com) to offer a memory or expression of

sympathy for his family.

This tribute was lovingly written in honor of Punch by his family.

# Tribute Wall



“ *Ralls C. Jones*

December 29, 2022 at 05:26 PM



“ *Punch was kind and considerate. Welcoming and gracious. His preference of a saddle to a chair makes him unique in my memory. I know he will be loved and missed by all who knew him. My condolences and prayers are with his family, as well as his extended family, inlaws, and friends.*

**Dolores Norton** - December 04, 2017 at 06:07 AM



“ *Having met Mr. Jones later in his life, I came to appreciate that his presence would command respect, and the knowledge he had showed him to be one that you would enjoy riding the trail with. I am glad that your back with Mrs. Jones. Rest well Cow puncher, you have earned it.*

**Ed Carpenter** - December 02, 2017 at 11:17 AM



“ *Was so sad to hear of the passing of this amazing man. What a legacy he was and is. I've know him for most of my life, as my dad and Punch were friends and did some sheep business. We know he will be missed by many, but he is now at peace with his maker and in the arms of the woman he loved and admired. May God comfort and Bless this family during this difficult time. Sincerely, Cheryl & Tim Wafful*

**Tim & Cheryl Wafful** - December 01, 2017 at 08:54 PM

KW

“ Dear Clabe, Debbie and Dirk,  
Katrin told me yesterday, that your dad has passed away. I am very sad to hear that. My sincerest sympathy to you all and your families. I met Punch only when I was at your ranch when I was a young man and I really admired him because of the way he took care of me then. He was always there when I had a hard time, like when I was in Lubbock to help building that barn at Debbie's place at that time. He saw me spinning and sliding your good dun horse behind the barn which I was definitely not supposed to do. He just asked me a couple of days later if I thought "Old Dunny" was turning around pretty good. He embodied what I thought a cowboy should be, not only because he could roll those "Bull Durhams" while riding a horse, but because of the way he was as a person and the way he did things.  
Your father has reached a good age and had a wonderful family that held together during some very bad hardships. That is a gift we can not ask for but the Good Lord has to grant us.  
My thoughts are with you all.....

Your friend,

Kay

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**Kay Wienrich** - November 29, 2017 at 09:06 AM

GM

Clabe, Debbie & Dirk,  
Sue told me of Punch's passing and I am so sorry to hear of it, even though I know he has not been on the best of health lately. I admired and loved both Punch and Suzanne for years and I was so fortunate for them to have shared their love of horses with me and to allow me to train and show for them on their horses. My memories of all of the great times we had together showing horses will be with me forever.  
Love to you all,  
Gene

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**Gene McElvaney** - December 02, 2017 at 05:06 PM



*Clabe, Debbie and Dirk,  
When someone is larger than life, it's difficult to find words to adequately express the sorrow engendered by their passing. I hadn't seen them in many years, but they were often in my thoughts. They both played a large part in the greatest generation ever and leave a legend in their place. Punch was the embodiment of a gentleman, a cowboy, a horseman, and a rancher - no mean feat.  
I loved them both.*

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**Kay Motley** - December 06, 2017 at 07:37 PM



*Dirk, Debbie, and Clabe,*

*There are so many things I would like to share about with you about your dad that it is hard to pick just one or two. I will never forget how, after your sister Michelle was born, he and your mother were in the front bedroom at Aunt Portia's. Baby Michelle was lying on the bed; she was so tiny. After the diaper change, your dad picked her up with such tenderness. That picture is indelibly etched in my memory. I will always remember him talking to me, doffing his hat, and calling me "little gal". I thought him the "handsomest" of all the cowboys I had ever known.*

*I am so sad that he has gone but I rejoice for I know that he is with your mom and his family. My mother always loved Punch and never missed the opportunity to tell me what a "fine fellow" he was. I am so glad that I got to visit with him at mother's funeral. He will always remain indelibly etched in my memory. I always like to think on John 14 when Jesus said, "in my Father's house are many mansions....". I believe that his mansion was ready.*

*I am so sorry for your loss; I will miss him, too.  
Ginette Richardson Shea*

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**Ginette Ritter Shea** - December 08, 2017 at 01:22 PM