

Tres McElroy Obituary

William Walter McElroy III, lovingly known as Tres, went home to the Lord, Friday, Dec. 6, in his home after a fatal heart attack at 56. Manager of the Cherry Canyon Ranch in Jeff Davis County, Tres was born in Pecos, Texas, on Aug. 10, 1963, to Sonny and Penny McElroy. Tres spent his entire life on the Cherry Canyon Ranch, only leaving one year to attend South Plains College. He is survived by his wife Jody Shackelford McElroy; daughter Mayle McElroy Chambliss, son-in-law Tray Chambliss, and granddaughter Traelyn Chambliss; parents Sonny and Penny McElroy; sisters Misty Williams (Lynn Williams) and Christy Barksdale (Joe Barksdale); and six nieces and nephews.

Since the time he was in diapers, Tres spent his whole life learning how to manage the animals, land, and water at the Cherry Canyon Ranch from his dad. Sonny's right-hand man, Rogelio Miranda, was also his mentor and padre at the ranch. Being with Rogelio his whole life, Tres learned to speak fluent Spanish. In fact – he didn't even speak English. Anyone who knows him, knew every sentence out of his mouth was a mix of Spanish and English. Tres met the love of his life, Jody Shackelford, at a roping in Van Horn. He said that the most expensive roping he ever went to. They were united in marriage Feb. 16, 1991, in Fort Davis. They began their life on the Cherry Canyon Ranch, and on May 16, 1993, they were blessed with a little red-headed fireball, Mayle McElroy.

Tres was an epic storyteller of lions, bears, ropings, and anything that went on in his adventurous world. He was a member of the First United Methodist Church in Balmorhea. Tres was the Balmorhea FFA Ag Boosters president for over 15 years, served as a committee member of the Reeves County Stockshow, board member of the Jeff Davis County Underground Water District, and vice president of the Jones-Espy-Finely Camp. Jim Espy was priming Tres to take his position at the cook shed at Camp Meeting. Jim said with a chuckle, "Some people would do anything to get out of that."

Tres was the kind of son who would do anything for Penny and carry on the legacy of managing the Cherry Canyon Ranch for Sonny. He was the kind of husband who loved Jody with his whole heart and soul. He was the kind of dad who Mayle could depend on and be there in an instant if she needed him. He was the kind of Papaw that would take little Traelyn on buggy rides all night long if she wanted. He was the kind of brother who would watch out for Misty and Christy like a father. He was the kind of uncle who would take you hunting and harass your boyfriends. He was the kind of neighbor who would die trying to fight fire on your ranch. He was the kind of friend who would help you brand and ship even if you gave him a horse that needed just a few more wet saddle blankets. He was the kind of cowboy that knew the Cherry Canyon Ranch like the back of his hand and that the younger generation told stories about. He was the kind of man anyone could look up to.

Quotes from friends and loved-ones:

"I'm a better person for knowing him. Epitome of a true West Texas man."

"Tres McElroy never said a bad word about anyone."

"He always met me with a smile on his face, a big hug, and a story of what was going on in his busy life."

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“Tres McElroy had more manners in his little finger than most men have all together. There wasn’t much he couldn’t do and he would try anything. But he would do it in a safe way.”

“Growing up in small communities you quickly become accustomed to hearing good stories about some that are more than just a man. Tres McElroy was one of these men. Not only for myself and brothers, but for many others of my generation. I’ve not only known Tres my whole life, I’ve known of him. In the era of so few cowboys, you looked up to him. He’s a constant topic of conversation for my generation still to this day. Tell me a man can’t leave a lasting impression. Always had a kind word. Said hello and meant it. No one was above or beneath him. Treated you just the same. But a hello was more like, “Que pasó mijo or amigo?” There are not many cowboys I know these days who haven’t mentioned Tres. I think Tres rarely met a stranger. I can only hope to one day leave such a mark. You will be missed but never forgotten. We all need to take a page from Tres.”

“Vaya con Dios amigo.”