

Newsletter – April 2016



We would like to take a little time and acknowledge the passing of different members of our roping family and friends. We share our sympathies with any of you who are grieving the loss of a loved one. We hope to always be mindful of those that have gone before us and honor them with our memories and traditions.

As a parent the loss of a child is inexplicable; our most sincere condolences to Jackie and Baron Pate regarding the passing of their son "Tater" Warren. Our hearts are with you always.

Harvey Johnston was "the" reporter of OTRA news anytime we were in Abilene, whether it be for a district roping or our OTRA Finals. He always came and checked in with us and always made sure to get our roping results published in the Abilene Reporter News; and he always managed to include something along the way about members of our staff and spotlight some of our roping contestants. Thank you Harvey for all of your support over the many, many years you took care of us!

Thanks to our Association founder, Digger Howard, we all have the opportunity to compete in the Original Team Roping Association, Inc. We will miss him so much! He gave us a lot of "education" and we are honored to continue on with the business he started so many years ago! Fairness, fun, family and friends were all laid as the groundwork for Digger starting this association. So please take time at the next OTRA event you attend and send a big thank you out to him for starting something we could carry on and enjoy today. He was such a character with so many stories there is probably not enough paper to print them all on! Please help us to continue to honor him and all the fun times we all had.

The following is his official obituary:

R.W. "Digger" Howard - September 19, 1940 - February 23, 2016

Digger was raised in Childress, Texas on a cotton farm. In 1959, he moved to Amarillo Texas where through hard work he eventually began his mechanical construction business known as Howard's Mechanical Co. Inc. Digger married Carolyn Schaffer in Childress Texas in 1963. His love of the sport of team roping led him to the development of the "handicapped number system" and the founding of the Original Team Roping Association in 1987. Digger and Carolyn retired to Arizona to enjoy the sunshine and continue roping. Digger has been recognized for his community efforts and contributions to western heritage as a recipient of the 2014 Tri-state Exposition Western Heritage Hall of Fame award, the 2011 dedication and naming of the RW "Digger" Howard Randall County 4-H livestock barn, and the Diggin the kids dummy roping at the Spicer Gripp Memorial Roping. Diggers motto "it's fer the kids" has impacted many youth through out the panhandle exemplified by his assistance in the formation of the Randall County Buyers Club, contributions and support to the at risk youth program known as the "Randal 4-H Dream Team", and Diggin the kids dummy roping which contributions are part of the Spicer Gripp Memorial Youth Foundation. Survived by his wife Carolyn, daughter Kim Estes and husband Jay, sons Todd Howard and wife Jennifer, Lance Howard and wife Erin, seven grandchildren: Britney Clark, Shandi Howard, Benjamin Estes, Jessica Howard, Jacey Estes, Dillion Roten and Brayden Howard; and two great grandchildren, Kaysen Howard and Jax Estes.

Memorial Contributions to Spicer Gripp "Diggin The Kids"

Dummy Roping Scholarship Fund P.O. Box 2237 Hereford, TX 79045

All Our Best to All of You!

Tim & Whitney McCright

Original Team Roping Association, Inc.

