



Neal Gay

June 25, 1926 - August 11, 2022

Legendary Texas Cowboy and Rodeo Producer, Neal Gay, rode into the final sunset on August 11, 2022 at the age of 96. He passed away peacefully at his Rafter G Ranch house with his family nearby.

Neal Gay is best known as the founder and producer of the Mesquite Championship Rodeo for 51 years and the contract producer of the Fort Worth Stock Show Rodeo for the past 43 years.

In the 70s and 80s, he and his family managed many other rodeos across North Texas each year.

Neal was a WWII Navy Veteran and entered his first rodeo in Atoka, Oklahoma in 1945. He was a steer wrestler, saddle bronc, bareback and bull rider.

Neal was among the early Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA) members. His PRCA membership card number was C902.

He was born in Dallas to mother Elsie Mae and father Malond on June 25, 1926.

Neal Gay is survived by wife, and love of his life, Kay Gay and three sons: Pete Gay and wife, Elissa, Donnie Gay and wife, Terri, and Jim Gay and wife, Brenda.

His grandchildren, Talli Gay, Megan Gay Maier and Summer Gay remain in the rodeo family interest.

Most friends remember Neal as a rowdy and tough minded cowboy in the early days and those close to him know him as a smart business man, true to his word, strong principled, with a love for God, family, rodeo, his ranch and his livestock.

In his early years, Neal supported his rodeo endeavors by selling used cars, real estate and found time to teach Sunday School.

in lieu of flowers the family requests memorials be made to the Justin Cowboy Crisis Fund www.justincowboycrisisfund.org or The Wounded Warrior Project www.woundedwarriorproject.org

A celebration of life will be held at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 23, 2022, at the Will Rogers Memorial Coliseum in Fort Worth, Texas.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

AUG **23**. 1:00 PM (CT)

Will Rogers Memorial Center
3401 W Lancaster Ave
Fort Worth, TX 76107

Tribute Wall



“ *Neal Gay*

October 08, 2023 at 07:43 PM



“ *I'll never forget you and Bob Blackwood taking me under your wings before the Mesquite arena even had a roof. Looking forward to seeing you both in the resurrection. May all who loved you find a measure of peace until then. Tooter Cope*

Tooter Cope - February 21, 2023 at 12:07 PM



“ *RIP The heart of The Mesquite Arena*

Carlos - October 19, 2022 at 08:27 PM



“ *Thank you Neil for believing in a dumb farm kid from Cash Tx. I would not have made it as a cowboy and now Arizona rancher without you and Jim for sure. I am forever thankful R.I.P.*

Ryan Oland - September 08, 2022 at 12:41 AM



“ *RIP Neal Gay...*



Debbie & Phil Bacon - August 24, 2022 at 06:54 PM

MC

“ I remember my time living on the ranch with great fondness. Neal showed me how to gather stock HIS way. At a later date I helped my then husband gather stock and he yelled at me I wasn't doing it right. Believe you me, I let him know I was doing it right because Mr. Neal taught me!! Those were some of the best years of my life. Neal and everyone made us feel so welcome. Hugs to all of you. RIP

Marcie Craver

Marcie Craver - August 23, 2022 at 05:36 PM

HH

“ Thanks you for being the Man and Professional you were... you provided a lot of cowboys and cowgirls with the opportunity to "Begin" their rodeo careers.. You always be a true Legend and will never be forgotten...

Harlan Hearn

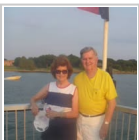
Harlan Hearn - August 23, 2022 at 03:27 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Neal Gay.



August 23, 2022 at 11:03 AM



“ Neal was a nice quiet well mannered person, but he was tough as nails. I remember one Saturday night, my wife, Pat and I were acting as host for the City of Mesquite to entertain the King and Queen of Sweden at the rodeo and Neal comes into the arena on his horse full speed. The horse made an immediate stop and Neal went over the horse's head, landing on his head and neck. The arena was silent and Neal was laying on the arena floor very still. Medics rushed to him and in a few minutes he got up, waved his hat to the crowd and walked off. He was one of a kind and will be missed. RIP

George Venner

George Venner - August 23, 2022 at 08:17 AM

LF

“ I got to meet Mr. Gay and his wife Kay while serving as a teacher and coach at West Mesquite High School in the late 1970's. Jim was one of my favorite players to coach and I remember his Dad and Mom always being there to support him and the Wrangler football program. I also had the privilege of observing and working with granddaughter Talli as she began her teaching career in the Mesquite ISD. You can see the influence and easily tell that the patriarch of the family has passed on a great legacy of character and faith through his children and grandchildren.

Lanny Frasier - August 22, 2022 at 03:34 PM

GP

“ I met Neal about 1955 at the Pleasant Mound Baptist Church. He was my Sunday School teacher. I had been riding about a year. He started taking me to rodeos and put me on anything anybody turned out. When I would inquire what the stock did he would say “It don't make any difference, get over here and be ready when they call for you”. Neal wouldn't let me collect mount money but he always paid all expenses including supper. He said I was there to learn, not collect money. I rode bulls but Neal would enter me in the bareback or bronc riding if Mesquite was short of contestants. I wasn't much of a bronc rider but I think he put me in so the fans could see a good wreck. Neal is a father to Pete, Donnie and Jim but, he was a father figure to me and countless number of young people (sometimes more than their real father). I try often to exhibit some of the qualities he instilled in me. I'll always remember him and I'll tell him how much when I see him in Heaven before long.

Galand Poe - August 22, 2022 at 08:54 AM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Neal Gay.



August 20, 2022 at 11:08 AM



“ Strength & Solace Spray was purchased for the family of Neal Gay.



August 19, 2022 at 04:29 PM

CM

“ I’ve known Neal all my life. He and my dad, Carl Jones, we’re best friends. I remember visits way back when he lived on Scyene road at pleasant mound. Pete was about 3 and Donnie was a baby. I would baby sit them sometime while our parents went out to eat. He and my dad owned a car lot together on Lake June road in Pleasant Grove. Lots of good memories. I know my mom and dad, aunt Vee and Uncle Carl, will have a grand reunion in heaven with their old friend. My deepest condolences to all the Gay family. He will be missed.

Carlene (Jones) McMahan - August 19, 2022 at 12:55 PM

JC

“ Judy Cox lit a candle in memory of Neal Gay



Judy Cox - August 17, 2022 at 10:40 PM

BM

“ Brenda Andrus and Paula Manous purchased the Tender Tribute for the family of Neal Gay.



Brenda Andrus and Paula Manous - August 17, 2022 at 05:46 PM

JM

“ Neal was not blood kin but I loved him like a family member.

I met Neal in 1953, he was my Sunday School teacher at Pleasant Mount Baptist Church.

One Sunday Neal asked me why I didn't come to church and I told him I had a rodeo to get to and it started at 1:00pm and church wasn't over until 12:00! Neal told me you come to church Sunday and I'll get you to Martins Mill by 1:00! And he sure did!! He drove like a race car driver!!! He told me then if I wanted to be a cowboy he would take me and teach me and he did just that.

I called Neal in June to tell him and Kay Happy Anniversary. He and Kay got married the same year as Sue and I did in 1956.

*I always wanted to be like Neal! But he sat that bar too high!!
With Love and Deepest Sympathy for your loss. Jerry & Sue McDonald*

Jerry & Sue McDonald - August 17, 2022 at 04:49 PM

JH

“ I got to meet Neal Gay and the rest of the family at high school rodeo's and local rodeo's and barrel races. You we see him there with Kay watching his granddaughters compete. He always had a sparkle in his eye watching them. He so loved it. But he would cheer for everyone. I think that's one thing I will remember him doing. Is showing his granddaughters the heart of competing. That you have to show your fellow competitors encouragement and compassion. He also taught his sons and grandchildren how to work hard. Proving that by, working as long and as hard as he could. There was no quit in him.
And one other thing I will always remember him for. Is that look in his eye, when he looked at Kay. He thought the sun rose and set on her. And of course she felt the same way about him. They have a love that will last into eternity.
Keeping all his family in friends in my prayers. Ride high Neal Ride High.

johnna hale - August 16, 2022 at 11:53 PM

BH

“ Mr Gay took a chance on hiring me to fight bulls for him in 1991. The very first night he told me if the out gate was closed that means i want you to go to the bull and make a round or i want you, the Barrel, or dummy to get hit. The first section i got knocked down and pushed around by a little black mulley. The fighting bull at the end of the Rodeo a bull name Shredder ran over and hooked me pretty good. Don Gay on TNN said Barry must want more jobs from my dad Neal Gay if you get hooked like that he will hire you back. And sure enough he did for 6 years at Mesquite the another 23 opening chute gates at Ft Worth Stock Show Rodeo. In 1995 a Bullfighter got hurt on a Friday night I showed up Saturday morning for a 10 am perf to open chutes and Mr Gay said you are fighting bulls now, I couldn't believe it that was like working the NFR for me. I have so many stories of Mr Gay saying if it wasn't for Neal Gay I couldn't have done this or that without him during my Rodeo career. I respected him as much as my own dad and he will always be one of my heros .

Barry Hankins - August 16, 2022 at 09:11 PM



“ Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Neal Gay.



August 16, 2022 at 04:36 PM

BJ

“ What a great run. Some of my earliest memories are of my granddaddy, Carl Jones, and Neal together. He was a link back to a better time when they were busy, on top of their game and being real men. They don't make them like that anymore. RIP Neal Gay, hope y'all are having a cup of coffee together, again.

Billy Jack Jones Jr. - August 16, 2022 at 08:53 AM

PJ

“ I love you Mr. Neal thank you for filling in the gap being like a dad to me
Thanks for wanting the best for me in life and loving me enuff to chew on my backside when I needed it
To Miss Kay my prayers and my love are with you

Paul "Strawberry" Jones - August 16, 2022 at 07:36 AM



“ *Divine Light was purchased for the family of Neal Gay.*



August 16, 2022 at 02:38 AM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Neal Gay.*



August 16, 2022 at 12:09 AM



“ *Serene Retreat was purchased for the family of Neal Gay.*



August 15, 2022 at 11:20 AM

TF

“ *In 1998 I was new to working in Mesquite and events at the Rodeo Arena, with Neil Gay and Jack Beckman; I was accepted with open arms as a family member to the Gay family. I will always treasure the off chance that I experience being at the Gay Ranch during a roundup for (back in the day) the full weekend rodeo events. They entire family accepted me as another roundup individual with an excellent lunch that they served their help every day of their hard work. Along with a tour of the property, stalls, and most of all the lovely home they lived in. Just outstanding and a treasured memory I will never forget. Tammy*

Tammy Ferrell - August 15, 2022 at 10:30 AM

BB

“ There are no words for the legacy Neal has left on our Western family. He was an incredible man who supported us in the opening of Billy Bob’s Texas, and helped us get the bull riding arena done right. Neal has made a difference in so many lives.... and I’m grateful to have counted him as a friend.
RIP partner,
Billy Bob Barnett

Billy Bob Barnett - August 15, 2022 at 10:21 AM



“ Sacred Duty Spray was purchased for the family of Neal Gay.



August 15, 2022 at 10:14 AM

CT

“ Growing up and being raised in Mesquite, TX, thank you for all the years of entertainment with the Mesquite Championship Rodeo, and the annual Mesquite Rodeo Parade. Cherished childhood memories! Prayers to all the Gay family. "Oh the last goodbye's the hardest one to say, ... This is where the Cowboy rides away ... ”



Cheryl Peters Thomasson - August 15, 2022 at 12:34 AM

BS

“ 1981 NFR Bullfighter Bill Shaw said that when he worked for Mr. Neal that he was more afraid of Neal than Mr. Neal’s bulls. We send our love and prayers for the family. Bill and Karen Shaw

Bill and Karen Shaw - August 14, 2022 at 07:02 PM

 Dee Ayala

“ Ridin' in greener pastures. Thankful for Mr Gay



Dee Ayala - August 14, 2022 at 06:52 PM

NA

“ *With heart felt and deepest condolences.*
Nila Gunstanson Addy



Nila Addy - August 14, 2022 at 01:30 PM

DF

“ *Dick Hammonds & Family lit a candle in memory of Neal Gay*



Dick Hammonds & Family - August 14, 2022 at 01:20 PM

DH

Late Dick Hammonds & Family

Dick Hammonds - August 14, 2022 at 01:21 PM

DF

“ *Dick Hammonds Family lit a candle in memory of Neal Gay*



Dick Hammonds Family - August 14, 2022 at 01:19 PM

EW

“ *I used to attend Mesquite on my birthday. Neal would ride around after the performance and shake hands. I imagine Neal and Colin, our American Blackbelly ram met at the gates Thursday. Colin probably tried to bust open the gates. Neal probably tapped Colin on the back and told him "Please wait your turn."*

Eden Watson - August 13, 2022 at 12:02 PM

CO

“ Charlie O'Reily purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Neal Gay.



Charlie O'Reily - August 12, 2022 at 06:29 PM

NE

“ My family and I grew up at the Mesquite Rodeo and loved him and the family. I made sure he had his coffee and cookies on the platform by the bucking shoots on rodeo nights. Scott & Nita Edwards. (Cooper Family)

Nita Edwards - August 12, 2022 at 05:53 PM

PO

“ He was my Sunday school teacher at Liberty Baptist Church. The Rev. Louis Hodge was pastor. My thought and prayers are with you Pete and Donnie who I when to school with. As well as all his loving family during this difficult time . 🙏
Paul Oglesby

Paul Oglesby - August 12, 2022 at 05:26 PM

CW

“ One of a kind and a class act for sure! Prayers for the family.

Carrie Wright - August 12, 2022 at 01:55 PM

MM

“ Thoughts and condolences to the Gay family. Truly a legend. Mark Miller

Mark Miller - August 12, 2022 at 01:18 PM

ST

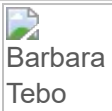
“ Thoughts and prayers to the Neal Gay family. Jerry and Barbara Starkey.

starkey - August 12, 2022 at 09:33 AM

JJ

Thoughts and prayers for the family. Neal was the REAL DEAL. Always a cowboy gentleman

Jim Jordan - August 12, 2022 at 10:30 AM



Barbara Tebo

“ This is where the cowboy rides away. He got to do what he loved and not every person can say that. Love the Mesquite Rodeo. Never got to meet Neal, but did meet Donnie. He used to come to our high school rodeo's In Mabank, Texas. Prayers to his friends and family. He will be missed for sure.

Barbara Tebo - August 12, 2022 at 01:41 AM

TH

“ Ohhhhhh my gosh!! I'm so sad 😞 What an outstanding man! Riding his bull right up into HEAVEN!!!



Teresa Harrison - August 12, 2022 at 12:03 AM

GR

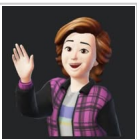
“ I will never forget whenever Neal Gay would come around the chutes, nobody would be setting on the chutes or anywhere else, he was to the point and loved to put on a great show. They sure do not make them like him anymore, I was just a young kid, too afraid to ever approach any of my rodeo heroes, but he reminded me of my grandpa and the "old timers" that hung around the cotton gin when I was a boy.
He will greatly be missed in the rodeo industry, one of the originals. My hat is off to his family and are all in my thoughts and prayers.

Gary Robinson - August 11, 2022 at 10:00 PM

KS

“ I worked at the rodeo for years mostly upstairs in the suites. Mr. Gay always had a kind word to say, a sweet smile or just a gentle hug to show his appreciation for the care we all gave each other in that rodeo family. There is no replacing that gentle soul. Love & sympathy to all his family.
Kim Williams-Stevens

Kimberly Stevens - August 11, 2022 at 08:59 PM



“ Angela Hayes lit a candle in memory of Neal Gay



Angela Hayes - August 11, 2022 at 06:26 PM



“ 1 file added to the album *Memories Album*



Max Slayton Funerals & Cremations - August 11, 2022 at 03:07 PM

DP

Heartfelt thoughts and condolences to the Gay family

David Petet - August 19, 2022 at 02:14 PM

JB

A legend and a life well lived! Time to rest now Neal. Praying for the family.

Jerry Burr - August 20, 2022 at 08:36 AM