

Elta Teola Murphey

Family History

Heritage Park 2019

Elta Joyce McAfee is honoring her mother Mrs. Elta T. Murphey who was an outstanding person and influence in her life. Elta T. Murphey was born in 1895 to a ranching family in Lone Grove, Llano County. The family moved to Rankin and then to Crane. Mrs. Murphey was one of four daughters and four sons, all of whom stayed in the ranching business. Mrs. Murphey succeeded and eventually had ranches in Irion, Reagan, Crockett, and Upton Counties. She enjoyed ranching very much.

Mrs. Murphey's husband, Thomas Jarret Murphey, passed away in 1938, so she spent most of her life as a widow and single mother. She leased out the ranches, but she methodically checked on every property several times a year. She made sure to talk to the people working on the ranch. Her daughter feels that what she observed during long car rides to inspect the ranches is how she began to learn about ranching.

Mrs. Murphey's eldest daughter Mary Elizabeth and her husband Teddy moved to the ranch after World War II and Teddy assumed operational management of the ranches. Soon after they returned, they tore down the cistern on the ranch which upset Mrs. Murphey. She couldn't imagine not having a water catchment. Due to this incident, Elta Joyce McAfee decided to memorialize her mother by donating the Heritage Park Water Catchment Tower in her honor.

Mrs. Murphey was a strong Christian, faithful to all church activities and raised her daughters in that vein. She also instilled the value of family being together and modeled it through her excellent care and attention to her own parents. Elta Joyce has sought to instill this in her children and grandchildren. Mrs. Murphey always insisted that family needed to spend time together, tell each other they are loved and honor each other with their presence.

Elta Joyce attended Hardin Simmons and when it came time for graduation. She told her mother that she would love to have a fur coat as a graduation present. Soon Spring weather came, and Elta Joyce decided she would rather have a diamond watch. After Elta Joyce graduated, her mother presented her with a big package that contained the coat, but it also had a smaller package that contained the watch. This is a treasured memory of a surprise from her mother.

Elta Joyce feels that her love of the San Angelo community and its cultural arts entities, all come from her mother's influence as well as her love of ranching. Elta Joyce feels that ranching will always be a part of our area, and she is encouraged seeing descendants seeking to keep their ranching heritage within their family. She also acknowledges that drought is a constant threat and that most conversation between ranchers is about rainfall or lack thereof. Elta Joyce and her mother always joked that Elta Joyce graduated from college on the same day that the horrific drought of the 1950's ended.

If Mrs. Murphey were here today, she might say, "Count your sheep, goats and cattle and keep those notes." Mrs. Murphey's books were meticulously kept with each business transaction accurately recorded. The bank deposits were all in perfect order and kept neatly in her business desk. Her advice to the current generation might be "Be appreciative of the people who worked this land, put their heart and souls in it, and spent their lives toiling in order to leave property for their descendants to enjoy."

Mrs. Murphey always supported Joyce's philanthropic efforts and community involvement. She believed in finishing what you have started and in having a vision. She encouraged working hard to accomplish your goals.

Elta Teola Murphey died in 1979.