



Austin Roper

October 12, 1940 - December 9, 2022

Austin Roper, 82, of Silex, passed away Friday, December 9, 2022 at his home.

Funeral services for Austin will be held Monday, December 12, 2022 at Bibb-Veach Funeral Homes & Crematory in Silex with Ron Turner officiating. Burial will be in Millcreek Cemetery in Silex. Visitation for Austin will be Sunday, December 11th from 3:00 to 8:00 p.m. at Ropin' R Ranch, 300 Hwy RA in Silex.

Austin was born October 12, 1940 to Donald Austin Roper and Effie Opal Bryson Roper. He was united in marriage to Sylvia Ann Meyer on July 21, 1998. She survives.

Also surviving are a daughter, Kelly (McEwen) Wilmes (Joe); grandchildren: McKenna Niendick (Benjamin), Maverick Wilmes, Malone Wilmes (Amanda Clark), and McIntyre Hermann (Jake); a great-grandchild due in March 2023; and sister, Mary Roper.

Austin was preceded in death by his parents.

Austin was a graduate of the University of Nebraska. He was a proud member of the United States Air Force, where he served in the Reserves for 6 years.

Austin was a professional horse trainer and had received many awards, as had those whose horses Austin had trained. Austin trained his first horse Vivacious, when he was only 11 years old. She was born on the family farm in Anniston, AL. He trained her completely by himself. He was too small to saddle her, so he taught her to stand and be saddled with a rig and pulley system! He can be seen in the family photo albums riding her bridle-less in shows and on trail rides. He went to his first sleep over horse camp in High Hill Missouri when he was in 8th grade. The next year he was hired as the riding instructor for the entire camp and for several years to follow! He is known both Nationally and Internationally for his excellent training and horsemanship skills. His love of horses has taken Austin through many types of training. He has trained and/or shown Hunter Jumpers, Barrel Racers, Western Pleasure, Saddle-seat, Driving, and both English and Western Dressage. In 2004 he was an integral part of teaching a rescue Fjord Horse to drive, ride and work in hand to become the #1 Fjord Horse in the United States. He also built local polo fields in the St. Louis area and ran a Polo barn for over 25 years before retiring to Silex. His love of the Arabian Horse took him from his beloved Vivacious all the way to being a Nationally known Arabian Horse trainer with multi National Championships to his credit. Sometimes all in the same year. He gave so many children the opportunity to fall in love with the Arabian Breed. He gave of his time, his knowledge, and his heart and passed his passion on to countless generations. Austin was also very passionate about Therapeutic Horsemanship. Sandy Rafferty shared her idea for the program and Austin was immediately on board. He volunteered both his training talents and much of his time to the development of well trained horses for this program. He was a Lifetime Honorary Board Member for Therapeutic Horsemanship. If it were not for him volunteering his horses and expertise, Therapeutic Horsemanship would never have come to be, what it is known as today. His "if I build it they will come" attitude kept both boarders and lesson kids learning from him for over 20 years at Ropin'-R-Ranch. He was always active in 4H wherever he was living and wrote the Horsemanship

Manual while he was the St. Louis County 4H Horse Leader. During his "retirement" he coached no less than 3 Miss Rodeo Missouri Queens, a Junior Miss Rodeo Missouri, a Little Miss Rodeo Missouri and countless local rodeo Queens all over the State of Missouri! They were on their own for speeches but they nailed their horsemanship patterns every single time!

Pallbearers will be Malone Wilmes, Maverick Wilmes, Sasha Lisovsky, Logan Shaw, Hunter Lavy, and Max Lavy.

Honorary pallbearers will be McKenna Niendick, McIntyre Hermann, Jennifer Bruenger, Tracy Miller, Sara Schroer, Deja Dotson, Dani Williams, Nikki Burns, Claire Beckmann, Sydney Burkemper, Shawna Eveland, Summer Burkemper, Sophie Burkemper, Karlie Ellis, Marlie Karsten, and Jordan Brinkman.

Memorials may be made to the Austin Roper Memorial Fun Show.

Cemetery Details

Mill Greek Cemetery

Silex, MO 63377

Previous Events

Visitation

DEC 11. 3:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Ropin' R Ranch
300 HWY RA
Silex, MO 63377

Funeral

DEC 12. 10:00 AM (CT)

Bibb-Veach Funeral Home's & Crematory LLC -Silex
11 South First Street
Silex, MO 63377
(573) 384-5555
<https://www.bibbveach.com/>

Tribute Wall

TM

“ *What a great loss for so many that knew him. I will always remember him as a great horseman, and a wonderful friend. He helped me rescue and train my horse Prince Ferdinand. Prayers for his family!!*



Tammy Miranda - January 03, 2023 at 11:05 PM

CA

“ Austin was a dear friend and great horseman. We had many exciting horse adventures. He not only trained my mare Latifeh, but he never left her side when she was down and sick. She was awful to trailer and threw a fit by the Purple Crackle, putting her hind leg out the back door. Austin was able to pull that door up to release her leg, with adrenaline rush strength. He also dislocated his shoulder in the process and rolled around on the shoulder of the toad to pop his shoulder back in. We kept going on to the horse show in Springfield.

The first time I rode White Fire, his beloved Arabian stallion, was at the 1971 SEMO University Homecoming Parade. The crowd was drunk and rowdy in front of the Playdium, and people ran right up to White Fire. He was such a good boy! He stayed so calm. The photo of me on White Fire appeared in SEMO yearbook and Southeast Missourian newspaper. I am posting this photo for Austin. Austin rode behind me on one of our young stallions who acted up the entire parade route! Austin will now be reunited with White Fire and all the other horses he loved. We all love you, Austin.💕



Carol Albright - December 13, 2022 at 10:24 PM

KH

“ So many memories of Austin through a lot of years. He taught me so much about training horses and he will be forever with all of us who knew him and loved him for all he did for us and his and my horses! Since I rode gaited horses, if one came in for training, I was chosen to ride and work with them. But I was always in hopes of making his Arab stallion (White Fire) one of mine. He was my "intro to Arabs." Thanks for many memories my dear friend!

Kathy (Krone) Hall - December 13, 2022 at 11:39 AM

MP

“ So saddened to hear about Austin’s passing. After returning to the St Louis area from Florida my parents had promised to buy us kids a horse. We found one in the Post Dispatch for \$225. Enter Austin Roper. He showed us a 12 y/o grade Palomino mare named Dandelion. She was perfect for us and remained a family member until her passing. This was 1964 when Austin was at Colonial Valley Farms in Chesterfield We had to share Dandelion between 3 siblings. He always found an extra horse for one of us to ride (probably to end our bickering). We were unbelievably green and basically knew nothing. He always took time to help us and sort of look after us when we were there. So many fond memories of our time spent growing up with horses.

Mary Page - December 13, 2022 at 09:13 AM