



Ray "Kid" Marley

March 22, 1930 - April 7, 2006

The man who once said, "I ain't ever gonna get old. I'm just gonna live a long time," Ray "Kid" Marley, cowboy, has passed away at 76. A long-time West/Middle Tennessee resident, "Kiddo" as many of his friends called him, died April 7 in Parsons, Tennessee from injuries sustained months earlier while training a horse. Here is a brief history of an eventful life. Born in 1930 on a farm in Lamesa, TX, by age 14, Marley was running a string of horses on several West Texas ranches. At age 17, he rode a cattle car to South Dakota, entered his first rodeo, won twice his months wages and , from there, his path was set. For the next three years, he worked in rodeo's "Golden Age" picking up big checks at Cheyenne, Madison Square Garden and all points in between. Then, in 1950, an event took place that would change Marley's life forever. Before a rodeo in Texas, a fellow Texan who had moved to Franklin, Bob Corley, offered Kid and a friend (Harley May, the man who would go on to, literally, write rodeo's rule book) an all-expense paid trip to Tennessee to work the Franklin rodeo. They turned him down. Confident they'd win that night, they mapped out their plans to parlay that evening's loot into travel expenses for a rodeo further West. One problem though, they didn't win a dime. Afterwards, they hunted down their new friend and a few weeks later, found themselves in Tennessee. Marley met a woman named Mary Margaret Clark and the rest, as they say, is history. History that included: fathering four sons, appearing on "Wide World of Sports", bringing some of the first quarter horses to Tennessee, being penned in song by post-Beat poet Leonard

Cohen, helping found Franklin's Mounted Patrol Unit, being written up in "Life" Magazine, training thousands of horses, befriending whoever he met, and on and on and on. Though known as the man with a big, kind heart and distinctive laugh, according to his son, Cody, it's stories of Marley's physical toughness that, through time, turned him into a "Paul Bunyon type figure." "My father once told me if everything said about him was true, he'd have to be 1000 years old. But, here's one story I know is true. One year, at the rodeo in Memphis, during my father's prime, mind ya, a pro wrestler named "Sputnik" Monroe showed up one night to challenge any cowboy to a fight. It was supposed to be a publicity stunt. Thing is, nobody told my father that. Boy, did he pick the wrong guy! Well, to mak a long story short, by the time the media got a hold of it, and "Sputnik" got out of the hospital, my fater was offered a wrestling contract. He just laughed it off." Cody goes on to add, "That said, my father had a deep side. He was a lot of things to a lot of people; father, firend, brother, son, mentor, hero. His soul was that of an artist. The horse was his canvas. The bridle his brush. All my father ever wanted to be was a cowboy. He succeeded. Kid Marley. Cowboy. He's the last one." Kid Marley is survived by four sons; Bill, Joe, Mickey, and Cody, six grandchildren, wife, Sally, and a legend of friends. As was his request, Kid Marley's ashes will be spread on lifelong friend, Riley Miller's ranch in Justiceburg, TX. A memorial service will be held Monday at Franklin's Williamson Memorial home at 7PM, visitation is from 5-7PM, Tuesday, another memorial will be held at 7PM at Pafford Funeral Home in Lexington.. Visitation from 5-7PM.

Previous Events

Visitation

APR 11. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Pafford Funeral Home - Lexington, TN.

71 Monroe Avenue

Lexington, TN 38351

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<http://www.paffordfuneralhome.com>

Service

APR 11. 7:00 PM (CT)

Chapel of Pafford Funeral Home - Lexington, TN.

71 Monroe Avenue

Lexington, TN

Tribute Wall



“ I enjoyed your site.##imported-begin##Pat Williams##imported-end##

February 12, 2009 at 01:16 AM