

Lorraine Cagliero - 2014

Lorraine has taken a family heritage with deep roots in the area and, through her work and dedication to ranching, community and family, grown a legacy for generations to come. She was born to a pioneer family west of Templeton, the daughter of Lawrence and Ruby Jespersen. As a young girl, her family had a Grade B Dairy on Los Osos Valley Road. In 1954, her Dad and Uncle purchased an alfalfa ranch north of Paso Robles and leased two other properties. Lorraine says, "Life was simple but good."

In 1956, the Cagliero Family purchased the ranch across the road from the Jespersen's. Five years later, in 1961, Lorraine married Pete Cagliero, and, "moved across the road." In the following 40-plus years, she and Pete built a life around ranching and raising the three children they were blessed with: Dena, Jon and Phillip Cagliero.

At the Cagliero Ranch, now known as the Slash C Ranch, they managed a cow/calf operation, grew alfalfa and harvested grain.

In 1986, that they purchased 3,000 acres in Vineyard Canyon, which is known as the Vineyard Wildlife Ranch. The ranch produces alfalfa, grain and forage hay and has a cow/calf operation. The ranch also has a private hunting club - the Slash C Hunt Club. The ranch is historic, the friars from the San Miguel Mission planted the first vineyard in 1797 to provide wine for the communion at the Mission, which is how Vineyard Canyon got its name. The friars also made tile and Adobe bricks from the soil on the ranch.

Lorraine has been a CattleWoman for 37 years; served on Cuesta College Foundation Board; French Hospital Foundation Board and has been involved in special projects at the San Miguel Mission. She has chaired and helped with many fourth-grade field trips, fashion shows, beef cook-offs and fundraising projects.

In 2004, Pete passed away. Lorraine and Pete raised their children well in the ranching and farming tradition. Each of them (John, Phillip and Dena) raised 4-H beef and all three children graduated from Cal Poly, as did their spouses (Samantha, Tracy and, our son-in-law Steve Price).

The Slash C Ranch is now owned by their son, Jon Cagliero and his wife, Samantha. At the Vineyard Wildlife Ranch, Jon does all the farming and Phillip does the accounting.

The ranching life is now being instilled in yet another generation. Lorraine has five grandchildren. Except for the youngest (who is not yet old enough to compete), they all have shown 4-H steers, heifers and lambs Lorraine says she, "Loves supporting the young people", and indeed there has been a lot of support - the family has purchased animals at the Mid-State Fair Auction for more than 50 years — a tradition that continues.

As might be expected of a true cattlemoman, Lorraine enjoys the Black Angus cattle, which she describes as "beautiful"; loves hosting the family's annual cattle brandings and seeing all the grandchildren and family in the ring. They end the day with a barbecue — as she says it's all about "neighbors helping neighbors."

In addition to watching the grandchildren grow up, Lorraine says her favorite pastimes are traveling, entertaining, gardening and the beach. In a humorous nod to the ranching and viticulture roots, she says the family motto is: "Eat beef and drink wine!"

She says that she is, "Very grateful to have made many wonderful friends through CattleWomen." In recognizing Lorraine Cagliero as the 2015 CattleWoman of the Year, the CattleWomen's Association says on behalf the organization, and all of San Luis Obispo County, that they have been fortunate and are grateful to have a friend and supporter in her.