

Susan Cochrane - 2016

Susan was raised on the western edge of the Carrisa Plains, by her parents Bob and Alberta Lewis. She had a great childhood on the ranch with her siblings Georga, Albert and Robert. They worked a lot of cattle, rode many horses, hoed lots of weeds, built miles of barb wire fences and still had to take of the daily chores like shoveling manure, feeding and checking water. "It was a great childhood!"

When they were of age, their parents drove them to Shandon for 4-H meetings; they all had steer projects. The 4-H leader joked her parents, "Susan is a little brushy!". The "brushy" days didn't last long once her parents purchased the Templeton Livestock Market (1963). This was a family endeavor and all the kids were fortunate enough to work alongside their immediate family and when they needed someone really tough they even got to have her grandfather, Al Stone, come show the rough stock who was boss.

For high school she was a Greyhound living in the dorms at Atascadero during the week and back to ranch on the weekends. Following high school, she made it a little further from the ranch and attended Cal Poly where she graduated from with a BS in Home Economics.

Upon graduation Susan moved to King City and was the head bookkeeper for Salinas Meat Company, a slaughterhouse in Soledad. From there she transitioned to Fat City Feedlot in Gonzales. She says she was so lucky to only be a short drive away from the ranch to help work cattle on weekend and at the sales yard.

At the age of 28 she married Cal Poly classmate, Bill Cochrane, and they moved to Salinas. Salinas was a good halfway point from the ranch and his family's orchard in the Central Valley. They started a family shortly after, three girls in eighteen months! Ann was born first and then fraternal twins, Kate and Jane. Times were very busy as a stay at home Mom but managed to carve out time while the girls were at school and evenings for landscape designing. The weekends and summers were filled with ranch work; alongside parents and siblings.

By the year 2010 all three of Susan's daughters had graduated from Cal Poly and went to fulltime employment in Agriculture. Bill and Susan were fortunate enough to relocate to the Paso Robles area and become full time ranchers. Bill is officially retired from the Operating Engineers but still gets to operate plenty of heavy equipment for rangeland improvements.