

# BOB MARRS

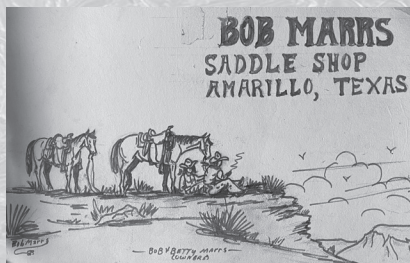
## 2020 WESTERN HERITAGE HALL OF FAME RECIPIENT

From his first saddle to his final saddle, Bob Marrs' quality workmanship has made him a legend in the saddle-making industry.

Bob and Betty married young in life, he was 16 and she was 15. They set out on an adventure that has lasted 73 years and blessed them with two children, Kathy and Debbie, in addition to sons-in-law and several grandchildren scattered all over the United States.

Bob began his career as a cowboy, not a saddle maker. Bob worked for ranches as a cowboy and then joined the United States Army in 1945. While the war finished in Japan, he made his way to Italy to help send home combat troops. After he was discharged, he married Betty in 1947.

Bob worked for numerous ranches in Oklahoma, Texas, Arizona and California. A friend suggested Bob learn a trade, since cowpunching didn't pay very much. Since all the cowboys worked with leather, it seemed right that he take up leather work. Having gone to night school for a year, after he worked all day on the ranch, Bob learned from the Oliver brothers (Bill and Jack) how to work with leather. Bob learned to make many different leather items but not saddles.



Saddle making finally made its way into Bob's life when he and Betty went to Montana to look for a cowboying job. While they didn't find a job in Montana, they did make their way to Gunnison, Colorado, where there was a western store with an empty saddle-making shop in it. Bob made his first saddle in Gunnison in 1949 and he talked the owners of that western store into hiring him. The government was supposed to send Bob money for learning to make saddles. However, with no one to teach him, the government said it wouldn't be paying him. Therefore, he and Betty were off again. This time, they made their way to Woodward, Oklahoma, to work for Thad Leachman Saddle Shop. Leachman's is where Bob indeed got started from one of the best saddle makers he had ever been around. Bob got a great start learning

from Leachman, but he wanted more out of the trade, so he moved to Lubbock, Texas, to work for EM Brown Saddle Shop. When things slowed down in Lubbock, Bob and Betty were off to Fort Worth, where Bob worked for Adkins & Bullingor Saddle Shop and eventually for Frank Leddy Saddle and Boot Shop.

Bob and Betty moved back to Lubbock when things slowed in Fort Worth, only to be met by slow times in Lubbock, so they went to the Waggoner Ranch. Bob grew tired of only seeing his wife and children at night, so he went back to Leddy's until he got a call from a friend in Amarillo about going to work at the Stockman's Saddle and Boot Shop. Bob started in Amarillo in 1951, and things went well until 1953 when the drought hit. Everyone was broke, so Bob and Betty took their girls to McLean and worked on the M. T. Johnson Ranch. A year later, Bob got a call from Cotton Harvey, owner of the Stockman's, who had a proposition for them. Harvey was nearing bankruptcy with the shop, so he suggested Bob and Betty take over the shop and all the indebtedness against it. If they did, the shop would be theirs. Well, they took the proposition, and on August 2, 1954, the business became theirs as well as everyone they now owed. Bob and Betty worked night and day for two years to pay off all the debt. They did it, and they built their credit up, which would help them through the years.

Bob and his team of saddle makers could make 75 to 100 saddles a year. Bob states that cowboys like his saddles because they are comfortable with a good seat, the stirrups were free and he used the best materials and trees. The Bob Marrs Saddle Shop could also make fancy saddles, but mostly made saddles for working cowboys who stayed in the saddle all day long.

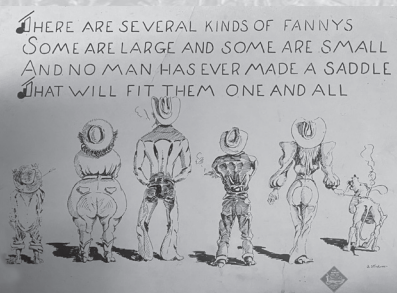
Bob and Betty took up painting in the 1970s and are surrounded by their original artwork in their home. Bob says there is little he would change about his life. The horses he has ridden, the cowboys he has known and the experiences he has had would fill a book.

Bob and Betty state that the working cowboy and rancher have always been the backbone of their business. They use top-quality material and have built the best saddles possible to the customer's specifications. Bob is a legend in the saddle making industry. He's so famous that he recently got a shout-out on Paramount Network's hit show "Yellowstone."

Congratulations!



*Betty and Bob Marrs*





# 2020 Tri-State Fair & Rodeo Scholarship Winners

With the assistance of Opportunity Plan, Inc., the Amarillo Tri-State Fair & Rodeo awards three scholarships each year. Winners must have graduated from a high school in the 26-county Panhandle area and currently enrolled in a community college or university.

The Tri-State Fair & Rodeo is proud to announce these area students as recipients of its 2020 scholarships.



## **Gage Lewter**

is the son of Jeff and Stephanie Lewter of Canyon. He graduated from Canyon High, where he was active in 4-H and FFA. Through 4-H and FFA, Gage participated in many veterinary, beef and livestock-related contests. He advanced to state in livestock quiz bowl, livestock skillathon, and vet med and competed nationally in livestock skillathon. He interned at Yarbrough Veterinary Clinic and University Church of Christ his senior year and is interested in going to veterinary school or becoming a minister. Gage will be attending Blinn College in Bryan in the fall.



## **Lainye Meador**

is the daughter of John and Ellise Meador of Umbarger. She graduated from Canyon High, where she was active on the Lady Eagle Softball team and in 4-H, showing cattle and hogs as well as serving on the Tri-State Fair Junior Board and Randall County 4-H Council. She also served as the public relations officer for District 1 Texas 4-H Council. She interned at Timber Creek Veterinary Hospital, and at Dawn Custom Cattle Feeders. Lainye will be attending West Texas A&M University in the fall and majoring in animal science.



## **Journey Sorrell**

is the daughter of John and Christina Sorrell of Allison. She attended Fort Elliott High and was active in FFA, golf student council, cheerleading, and held a class officer position. While in FFA, she served as a chapter and area officer. She participated in 4-H, meals on wheels, toys for tots, and other community events. Journey will be attending West Texas A&M University in the fall and majoring in agricultural communications.