

Sutherland: Neil

April 23, 1948 —April 15, 2018

Neil Sutherland was born in Cereal during a snow storm April 23, 1948, the third son of Olive (Partridge) and Don Sutherland. He died in Oyen April 15, 2018, just eight days short of his 70th birthday.

Olive documented that Neil weighed 5 pounds and had a difficult birth. She went home May 3 but wrote "May 1 Cameron drove 10 miles across country with team and sleigh taking Maxine to Hills School at the Jim Hardie corner where she was teaching. Maxine took Colin (8) with her and Donald (11) stayed at home. He rode bareback to school at Lundberg."

Neil was quite a surprise package for his older brothers as Olive was sure the baby would be a girl. Despite the age difference he was very close to them. His parents must have known he would make his own mark in life as they did not give him a middle name like everyone else in the family.

He attended school in Lanfine from Grade 1 to 4. When that school closed he travelled to Cereal with his mother (principal) for Grade 5 through graduation in 1966.

He started riding bareback horses about 1963, trying to keep up with his friend Gordon Ellertson. A bucking chute was assembled in the Sutherland corral and many a saddle horse became a practice horse. He joined the CCA circuit, travelling in the early years with Fred Walker and Gordon Ellertson. He honed his bareback skills and made life-long friends along the way.

Neil spent his whole life on the family farm. He shared a love of horses, cattle and doing leather work with his father and together they repaired saddles and tack in their leather shop. Like his brother Don, Neil was an expert at braiding leather. His passion for horse sales and buying and trading horses began while travelling with Don and Cathy during his younger years. An excellent heeler, Neil was called upon at many local brandings. He trained many horses not only for riding but for driving and usually had a team to pull the stone boat.

Neil raised Registered Quarter Horses and proudly displayed his 20-year membership in the American Quarter Horse Association (2005) on his living room wall.

From his mother he in-inherited a love of collecting and reading books and visiting, keeping track of family and friends, making regular phone calls to all to see how they were doing.

Neil carried on the love of music passed down from his parents and grandparents. He could play the banjo, guitar, violin and piano and took every opportunity to join in a music jam. The old house rang with music for years. His nieces say he could even sing.

Over the past eight years he enjoyed building fences, off and on, with Jordie Campbell.

He was predeceased by his mother Olive (August 31, 1997), his father Don (December 27, 1997), his twin nephews little Donnie (1959) and Jimmy (1973), brothers Don (January 5, 1999) and Colin (2007).

Neil is survived by his sister-in-law Cathy Sutherland; nieces MaryAnn (Blaine) Marr and family; Chrissie (Alan) Malaka; Holly Sutherland and family; nephew Cam (Jane) Sutherland and family; his friend Holly Sparrow, and his dog Teddy Bear; aunts and cousins.

Cremation. Celebration of Life at later date to be announced.

A poem found tucked in his bedside drawer—

To my son Neil

Neil, my Neil

The one we nearly lost

Through storm and snow and ice

And the doctor stuck in drifts.

But his little self hung on

He bridged the breach

And there he was

And still is—

The base of our home,

The rock of my life.

He has horses, cows, and leather

work

And a banjo, books and friends.

And he is mine,

And I love him.

Neil, my Neil!