



Willis Daniel "Griz" Griswold peacefully passed away on July 6, 2010 in Bozeman. Griz was born on January 18, 1929 in Belgrade, Montana, to John "Howard" and Myrtle (Alderson) Griswold. He was truly a native son of the Gallatin Valley. He spent his entire life residing in the Gallatin Valley, with the exception of his service in the Air Force. He never lived more than twenty miles from the little house in which he was born, just south of Belgrade.

Griz attended school in Belgrade, and graduated from Gallatin County High School in 1946. After graduation, he joined the Air Force and was stationed at Malmstrom Air Force Base in Great Falls. He fulfilled his Air Force commitment in England, and after serving his country, was honorably discharged in 1953.

Griz married Dorothy Hoell on September 30, 1951. They began their life together living in Bozeman. Griz took a job managing an Angus cattle ranch in the Springhill area, where they lived for over ten years. He continued to develop his interest in the livestock and agriculture industry, and in 1962 attended the Western College of Auctioneering in Denver, Colorado. He became well-known in the region for his fairness, quick wit and sense of humor that he exhibited as he conducted farm auctions in southwestern Montana. He worked as an auctioneer at the Bozeman Livestock Auction yard, and traveled to auctions at other livestock yards and production bull sales. He often volunteered his auctioneering services for numerous charity benefits, and especially enjoyed the opportunity to sell the 4-H livestock at the Montana Winter Fair.

In the mid-60's, Griz and Dorothy bought a small ranch west of Belgrade where they raised cattle, and also became interested in raising Hampshire sheep. Together, they developed a nationally renowned flock of Hampshire sheep that became, and still remains, the breed standard throughout the United States. They showed and sold their sheep across the United States and Canada, and developed many lifelong friendships along the way. Griz especially enjoyed being able to share his knowledge of the sheep industry with 4-H members, and always welcomed visitors to the ranch to share in lambing and shearing experiences. As his reputation grew in the sheep industry, Griz was invited to judge at a number of sheep shows and sales across the country and in Canada, the most notable of which were the national Ram Sale, Houston Stock Show, and the Canadian Royal Show.

In addition to his ranching life, Griz worked for over twenty years for the State of Montana, and retired in 1989. He filled his retirement years volunteering for a number of local organizations, including Habitat for Humanity, the Red Cross, American Legion Baseball, Belgrade Senior Center, and his particular favorite, the Pioneer Museum, where he worked as a tour guide.

He was preceded in death by his parents, John and Myrtle Griswold; and his wife, Dorothy, in 1989.

Griz is survived by his children, Rhonda (Kim) Hansen of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, and Stacy (Felica) Griswold of St. George, Utah. He is also survived by his grandchildren, Lane (Dawn) Hansen, Corey (Brandon) Friis, Abbey (Ken) Langford, Justin Griswold, and Krystin Griswold; and great-grandchildren, Tanner, Camryn and Dallin Hansen, Marin and Caden Friis, Kellen, Colten, Carsen and Kenna Langford. Also surviving are his sister, Beth Savano; brother, Steve Griswold; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Griz will be remembered fondly by those who knew him for his easy smile, twinkling eyes, quick wit, and gems of "country wisdom" that he shared. He leaves the legacy of a life that stands as an example of integrity, honesty, work ethic, and especially, a life lived with purpose.

Memorial Services (casual western attire preferred) will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday, July 10 at the Belgrade Community Church. In lieu of flowers, Griz would be pleased to have donations in his name sent to The Pioneer Museum, 317 W. Main. Bozeman, MT 59715