

## In Memoriam

### **Billy Joe “B. J.” Shepherd**

Billy Joe “B. J.” Shepherd, Bridgeport, Texas, 95, passed away on November 17, 2020.

He was born on June 17, 1925, in Tulia, Texas, to the late Cas and Bettie (Sanders) Shepherd. He proudly served in the Navy during World War II as a seaman first class aboard the naval destroyer USS Picking DD-685.

In 1939, he was given a Registered Jersey bull under a Texas Jersey Cattle Club promotional program at the Fort Worth show. The next year, he brought the bull to the show and won the class, thus beginning a lifelong career devoted to Jersey cattle. Several foundation cow families were imported from the Isle of Jersey.

Shepherd purchased the farm near Bridgeport in 1949 with an FHA loan and a dollar down. He grew the farm to 320 acres and 200 head of Jerseys and rented an additional 600 years. Shepherd also owned racehorses and dabbled in the oil and gas industries.

He was well known in the show ring as both judge and exhibitor. He attended his first All American Jersey Show in 1964 and exhibited every year for more than two decades. Among the standouts were Imperial Sleeper, Winner of the 1967 National Jersey Bull Futurity and Grand Champion Bull of the 1968 All American Jersey Show, and M.P.M. Polly, 1978 Reserve All American Three-Year-Old. Shephard won the Lynn Gower Showmanship Award in 1969 and Premier Exhibitor in 1979.

Shepherd judged the All American Junior Jersey Show in 1976 and 1979 and the National Jersey Jug Futurity in 1980. He was associate for the Futurity in 1974. Many of Shepherd’s prize-winning females were also standouts for production. Firstcrest Beacon Missie was named Grand Champion at every major show in Texas and had lifetime credits of more than 200,000 lbs. milk in the early 1970s.

Shepherd Jersey Farm regularly consigned to leading sales, including the All American Jersey Sale, the National Heifer Sale, the Kentucky National Sale and the Texas Bluebonnet Sale. The previously mentioned “Polly” was the high selling cow of the All American Jersey Sale in 1979.

Shepherd served as Director of the American Jersey Cattle Club from 1982-1985 and was director and officer of the Texas Cattle Club for more than 20 years.

He also belonged to Associated Milk Producers Inc.

He was a member of the Wise County Veterans Group and Oak Tree Baptist Church of Poolville. B. J. took pride in helping to build the Veterans Park in Decatur and was a member of Roll Call.

Shepherd is survived by his son, Joe Michael (Earlene) Shepherd; stepdaughter, Kellie (Terry) Ross; brother Guy Shepherd; sister, Hazel Rhoades; four grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by a stepson, Gary Womack, and brothers, W.J. “Jack” Shepherd, Kenneth Shepherd and Don Shepherd.

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