

2015 Honorary Lifetime Member Award

Dru Roberts

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FIRST FOR HUNTERS

Outfitting has been in my family for generations. Several of my maternal great uncles were outfitters. My dad started outfitting in 1947 and I grew up helping with hunters. Sometimes even guiding the guides before I was old enough to have a license. My folks had a small ranch and I developed a love for cowboying, especially roping. I went to college on a rodeo scholarship and received an associate degree.

In 1971 Tawny Frandsen of Firth, Idaho, and I got married. I had planned to guide for Dad that fall, but two weeks after we were married, Dad died. Therefore, I became the outfitter at the age of 22 and became partners with my 18 year old brother, Louis. I didn't join the Wyoming Outfitters Association right away, but when Harold Turner was president and Keith Stilson was secretary, Keith sent me a letter of invitation. Keith was a long time family friend, so I thought that if he was a member then maybe I should be too. I asked Irv Lozier about it and he felt it was important enough that he would even pay my dues, I said no to that but I joined in 1976. That fall at my first convention, Irv took me under his wing and introduced me to many members. I was very impressed with the Association and tried to become as active as possible. I was honored to be elected to the board of directors in 1980. In 1982, the Forest Service came up with a bid and prospectus system for issuing permits. I was chairman of the Forest Service committee and became part of the Wyoming delegation, along with Harold Turner, Rod Doty, Glenn Fales and Ron Platt. We traveled to Washington DC to fight that proposal and won. At the time national news was focused on President Reagan testifying at the Hinkley trial, but on Capitol Hill it was "The Cowboys are in town". They were definitely not accustomed to seeing that many



cowboy hats.

Also, in 1982 I was nominated to be vice president, but Irv Lozier was nominated from the floor and won. When he became president in 1983, he appointed me as the secretary -treasurer. I was elected vice president in 1985 and then served as president for two terms.

In 1998 my brother, Louis and I started parting ways and Tawny and I sold our cows. Louis kept the cattle grazing permit and I kept the outfitter permit. Tawny and I are cowboys at heart and started contracting the care of Barney Ranches 1200 mother cows on the forest.

During this time, we had three children, Tracy, Justin and Deena. All three grew up to be hunters and our son, Justin guided for me for 20 years. Tracy's husband Ray, also guided for about 15 years. However, they have other jobs and couldn't realistically take over the outfitting business. As time went on we found ourselves cowboying more and hunting less. It became hard to justify replacing old horses and equipment. Tawny became a brand inspector in 2008 and her busiest season coincides with hunting season. The long days trying to do too many jobs takes a toll on young people, let alone old folks like us, so with heavy hearts we decided to sell.

I've always said that I never made any money in the outfitting business, but I made a million dollars worth of friends. I am very proud of the fact that I had many repeat clients who became close friends, hunting with us for over 25 years. I know we will miss having hunters this fall.

I'm deeply honored to be a lifetime member. Thanks for the memories. 🦌

