

Donald Dee Wilbur Obituary

3/1/1928 - 9/11/2025



A pillar of the community, Don Wilbur was well-known in Deadwood, Oregon, and throughout the Pacific Northwest, as a hard-working leader, business owner, and local philanthropist.

Don's ancestors settled the Deadwood area in 1908. He grew up logging and ranching, continuing the tradition to develop the beautiful valley, and an incredible life, on his own terms. He was an avid fishermen, hunter, cattleman and trailblazer. He built veneer plants in Deadwood, Swisshome and Waldport, bought and donated lands, and created the first artificial reef off the coast of Oregon, and the first estuarine wetland mitigation bank in Oregon.

Don provided the land and assistance to help start the Swisshome-Deadwood Rural Fire Department, and was a volunteer firefighter for most of his life. He served on the Boards of the Port of Siuslaw, Mapleton Schools, Deadwood Pioneer Cemetery, and 40 years on the Blachly Lane Co-op board; while he was Chairman they started the Pioneer Telephone Cooperative, later combining rural co-ops together to form Casco, providing the first local internet service and DirecTV to the area.

Don hosted the Deadwood Rodeo on his ranch for 11 years—a not-to-be-missed annual celebration that drew thousands of families. Kids looked forward to class trips to ride on Don's "Sea Sweep" yacht from Mapleton to the Siuslaw Coast Guard station, and hundreds learned how to swim in his pool, taught by Red Cross instructor Sky Pennel. Countless locals have camped, fished, swam, and played at his riverfront properties near Swisshome.

Don is preceded in death by his daughters—Sally, Christina, Nancy, and Patsy; he is survived by his partner-in-life Johnnette Roane, son-in-law Leo Owens, five grandchildren—Joey, Joshua, Barnaby, Bridgette, and Katie, and many great-grandchildren.