
Remembering Myrtle A. Dow

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Myrtle Althea Dow
October 8, 1929 - June 18, 2015

Many of you across the country likely have fond memories of Myrtle and Roy Dow of Black Pines Sheep in Eaton, Colorado. Myrtle passed away about two days before the Black Sheep Gathering this June. I'm told that she and Roy had just returned from a trip through the Panama Canal. Hopefully, that was a great pleasure for her, as I know that over the past few years, she had several serious strokes and suffered with some dementia.

Myrtle was born and raised in Portland, Maine. She came to the Rocky Mountain West as a young woman where she fell in love with the country and a young cowboy named Roy Dow, whom she married in 1957. They had a daughter, Joy Lynn "Jodi" Dow-Uthe who lives with her husband Mark in Ackley, Iowa.

My first contact with Myrtle was in the early 1990s when she was the only one outside the Northwest area who advertised CVM/Romeldale sheep. She didn't have very many, and Colorado was too far for me to go. I kept in touch a bit, and heard of them often, but it wasn't until a couple of years later at the Black Sheep Gathering that I met them. I was helping another friend with her sheep in the show ring pens when two of them did somersaults in the shavings. I was madly trying to clean them up when a very spritely man in a cowboy hat hopped into the pen to help. I introduced myself, and he said he was Roy Dow. I was shocked and thrilled. They had not been to the Gathering in several years. That is where our friendship began, and it has continued ever since, although we have not been in close contact since they quit coming to Eugene due to health reasons.



Myrtle Dow participates in the 2002 Black Sheep Gathering Spinner's Lead. Photo: Peggy Lundquist.

One cannot really talk about Myrtle without Roy or vice-versa; they were an incredible team. They were integral in starting the Estes Park Annual Wool Market Fiber Festival in Colorado, and I believe the Wool Festival at Taos in New Mexico. They raised several breeds from Karakul to Romeldale. They frequently had champion fleeces along with champion sheep at the shows they attended, and they attended lots. They traveled in an old motor home with a small sheep trailer behind. Year after year they thought nothing of driving back to the Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival, out to the Black Sheep Gathering in Oregon, back to Colorado, then just a few miles away to the Estes Park Festival. That same fall they'd drive to the New York Sheep and Wool Festival in Reinbeck and later down to New Mexico for the Wool Festival in Taos. Sometimes they also attended the North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE) in Louisville, Kentucky. They loved to take different routes every time.

One year they followed us home after the Black Sheep Gathering for an overnight stay. We gave them directions, as we thought they might get a little behind in that old motor home. Not Roy and Myrtle, they weren't two minutes behind us pulling in the driveway. Winding mountain roads didn't bother them in the slightest. We perused the map that night, and they decided they would cross through the center of the state on Hwy 26, as they hadn't been that way in a while. After a good visit and night's sleep, they and the sheep headed for home the next morning.

One of my favorite stories was the time when they were back at NAILE and someone else's sheep got out and were running scared around the grounds in the middle of the night. Nobody could catch the terrified sheep, so Roy, being a good cowboy, ran back, got his favorite catch

rope and roped the sheep! A sheep rodeo in the middle of the night in Louisville. The sheep, although a bit mused, got safely back to its assigned pen.

Myrtle, you will be missed, but you are free of your last few years of trials. Roy, I hope you are able to cope. There are many of us sending you kind thoughts.

