



## William Hartlage Jr.

January 28, 1934 - August 17, 2020

William Hartlage Jr., a straight-talking, highly respected cattleman known throughout Texas, died Monday, Aug. 17 after a valiant fight against COVID-19. He was 86.

“Junior,” as his friends call him, was a cowboy to the core. He lived his entire life in Fort Bend County, where his family planted deep roots as farmers and ranchers after immigrating from Germany and settling here in 1894.

Junior was born Jan. 28, 1934, to William F. “Will” Hartlage and Ivy Mae Hartlage, in a small wood-frame house on the family farm in the historic Foster Community.

The youngest of six, Junior’s love for cattle and horses came naturally. From the time he could sit a horse, he recalled working cattle alongside his father. In a 2003 interview with the Fort Bend Herald-Coaster, Junior shared memories of long cattle drives, moving cattle from one pasture to the next, with a brief stop at a country store.

“We’d get a nickel soda water, some cheese and crackers and some summer sausage and then keep going,” he said.

He recalled seeing his father work in the family’s vegetable garden as he did

his morning chores of milking cows, feeding chickens, hogs and other animals and later, mixing feed for the cattle. His mother cooked their meals on a wood stove.

Like most other country kids, he swam in nearby Jones Creek, hunted ducks and doves, but mostly tended livestock on the family's working cattle ranch.

In 1950, at age 16, he showed the Grand Champion Steer in the Fort Bend County Fair. Because of flooding that cancelled the auction that year, he had to wait several months to collect his \$1,000 check.

He walked to school as a kid, and later attended elementary school in Richmond, and high schools in Richmond and Rosenberg and then Lamar Consolidated when the twin cities combined their school districts. He enjoyed weekend roping events, where he earned extra money from breakaway and tie-down contests on his favorite mare, Old Gray.

As a teenager, Junior was running his own small cow-calf operation and hauling neighbors' cattle to local meat markets and stockyards in Houston. There, his strong work ethic and keen eye for cattle caught the attention of two men who founded the Farm and Ranch Commission Company.

They hired him and thus began a 66-year career of work in stock yards throughout Southeast Texas, including Port City Stockyards in Houston and Sealy. Ranchers all over the state called on Junior to help them buy top cattle to build their own herds. He helped many youngsters in 4-H and FFA choose show calves for the fair, just as he did as a teenager. He was always quick to lend a hand when needed.

Like most cowboys and cattlemen, he was a modest man of few words. But his confident nod and the flick of his wrist at a cattle auction spoke volumes.

His peers and his favorite nephew and best friend, Tommy Holmes, say Junior's ability to read cattle -- and most people -- was unmatched, along with his values of honesty, integrity and hard work.

In the final weeks of his life, at age 86, he was still going strong, pulling a trailer six days a week to different stockyards from Flatonia, El Campo, Wharton, Brenham and sometimes Navasota, buying and hauling cattle for himself and his customers. And, he was still employed as an order buyer for a packing plant.

"Ranching is something that's in your blood," he once told the Fort Bend Herald-Coaster reporter as she profiled him as a living legend of the real working cowboy.

Junior said he loved his life and wouldn't trade it for anything. We wouldn't trade anything for having Junior in our lives.

Junior Hartlage is survived by his wife of 45 years, Charlotte; daughter Robin McQueen and husband Gary McQueen of Cedar Creek, Tx., sons Carson Hartlage and wife, Cindy, of Beasley, Tx., and Michael Hartlage of El Paso, Tx., stepson Rex Becker and wife, Diane, of Richmond, and nephew and best friend, Tommy Holmes and his wife, Debbie, of Beasley, Tx.; grandchildren, Matthew, Joel and Natalie McKee, Abby Kettler, Katie Sabrsula, Will Hartlage, Christina McCormick, Andrea Wilkerson, and Jacob and Rachael Becker; nieces: Melissa Iturria, of Grapevine, Tx. and Cathey Holmes, of Rosenberg, nephews David Holmes, of Austin, Tx. And John Carhart, Seguin, Tx., and six great grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by sisters: Vera Carhart, Lenora Holmes, Eva

Sims, Janet “Jennie Belle” Richter; a brother, Edwin Hartlage, and nephew Wyatt Holmes.

Funeral services are scheduled for Monday, Aug. 24, at Davis-Greenlawn Funeral Chapel in Rosenberg. Visitation at 9:00 a.m. with service at 10:30 a.m. (Limited to 100 attendees & masks are mandatory).

Pallbearers include Matthew McKee, Joel McKee, Will Hartlage, Greg Holmes, Matt Gore, and Jacob Becker.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made to the Alzheimer’s Foundation of America ([www.alzfdn.org](http://www.alzfdn.org)) or the Bluebonnet Equine Humane Society ([www.bluebonnetequine.org](http://www.bluebonnetequine.org)).

Condolences to the family may be shared online by visiting [www.davisgreenlawnfh.com](http://www.davisgreenlawnfh.com) or by mail: 159 Union Chapel Rd., Cedar Creek, Tx. 78612

Arrangements are under the direction of Davis-Greenlawn Funeral Home, 3900 B.F. Terry Blvd., Rosenberg, Texas 77471, Phone: 281-341-8800.

# Tribute Wall



“ *Davis Greenlawn Funeral Chapel and Cemeteries created a Tribute Video in memory of William Hartlage Jr.*



---

**Davis Greenlawn Funeral Chapel and Cemeteries** - August 22, 2020 at 06:58 AM

LP

“ *Mr Junior was a true Southern gentlemen cattlemen and I miss him. Over the years he was never too busy to give advice or share a story, often just when I needed it most. My condolences to the family and many, many friends he had. I am thankful for being blessed knowing him. Laura Parnell*

---

**Laura Parnell** - October 09, 2020 at 04:30 PM

RT

“ *We'll all miss Junior. He was always kind, welcoming and a great mentor. Years ago I told a cattle man that Junior was helping me with our cattle program. He encouraged me to stay with Junior. He said that he was the best in the business, and so honest you could shoot craps with him on the phone. Most of all I'll miss this great friendship. I know the family will miss him even more. Thank you for sharing Junior with all of us through the years. We are indebted. Now this hard working man can enjoy well deserved rest for eternity. Ray & Ramon Heritage Ranch*

---

**Ray Taylor** - August 24, 2020 at 09:26 AM

JK

*My condolences to the Hartledge family. May the memories of JR give you the strength for today and many more tomorrows.  
Joan*

joan Kriesien - August 25, 2020 at 12:41 AM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of William Hartlage Jr..*



August 24, 2020 at 09:17 AM

RK

“ *My prayers are with the William Hartlage family today. Even though I never personally met Mr. Hartlage, he was always great to me. I began feeding cattle for Mr. Hartlage four years ago and I always enjoyed him, his insight on the cattle industry, and his optimistic attitude he brought to me and the cattle industry. I always appreciated his quiet spoken and positive attitude, he will be missed. God bless his loved ones in this time of loss.*

*Robby Kirkland*

Robby Kirkland - August 24, 2020 at 08:41 AM

JJ

“ *Our thoughts and prayers are with the Hartlage family. Mr Jr was a wonderful and kind man. The cattle industry has lost an icon He was a very soft spoken man and always greeted you with a smile My Tuesday sale will never be the same without him*

Jason & Karan Janes - August 23, 2020 at 11:10 PM

GI

“ *Gina lit a candle in memory of William Hartlage Jr.*



Gina - August 22, 2020 at 04:59 PM

MI

“ *Jr. thank you for the mentoring and memories as a young man. Still tell stories about experiences with you to my family. Thank sir. Go with God now, love you!  
MB*

Mike - August 21, 2020 at 09:56 PM



“ *Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of William Hartlage Jr..*



August 21, 2020 at 03:00 PM

JM

“ *We will truly miss Mr. Hartlage. He would come in the store and visit, get what ever he needed. The main thing was listening to him and my dad Jack Heitman talk about their cattle and how many he hauled for dad last time also talk about old days. Prayers for the family. We loved him!!  
Love Janet and Kenny Meyer, Jack Heitman and the Corral Western Store girls*

Janet Meyer - August 21, 2020 at 11:04 AM

RO

“ Sending my deepest condolences to Mr. William Hartlage Jr.'s family. He was one of the greatest ranchers in the state of Texas and a real cowboy. Above all, he was a great person and had a strong work ethic that was very admirable. I have had the pleasure of knowing him since 1985 and it was an honor working with him. He will be missed, may he rest in peace.

*Ramiro Antonio Olivares and Family*

---

**Ramiro Olivares** - August 20, 2020 at 04:49 PM

TG

“ Mr Jr will be missed very much, but never forgotten. He was a true cowboy that was very well respected in the cattle industry. He lived his life working with the passion he had for the outdoors. Mr Jr touched a lot of people lives and I was blessed to have met Mr Jr. My sympathy and prayers goes out to the family of Mr.Hartlage, God Bless.

*Tony Gonzalez*

---

**Tony Gonzalez** - August 20, 2020 at 11:32 AM

LB

“ Junior was a true southern gentleman, who was loved & respected by many! My family & I are blessed to have shared many wonderful memories with him & Charlotte! He will be missed by all who knew & loved him! 🙏💔🙏

---

**Lynn Baudoin** - August 20, 2020 at 09:08 AM

AH

“ Junior was a true Texas Legend!! Our thoughts and prayers are with his family. May he Rest In Peace!!  
Otto and Alane Haardt

---

**Alane Haardt** - August 19, 2020 at 11:45 PM

TS

“ Sending condolences to his family. Very sad day for Texas loosing a great cattleman. I have the pleasure of knowing his daughter Robin and feel like I knew him personally from all her stories. He certainly will be remembered by many.

---

**Tami Stanley** - August 19, 2020 at 06:46 PM

CR

“ My sympathies to the family. I was fortunate to have met Mr. Hartlage a few years ago. Robin and I stayed the night while horse shopping in the area. I saw the love he had for Robin and the passion he had for cattle buying. Tommy came and saved the day when Robin and I got stuck in the driveway after a rain storm. Great memories. Hoping the stories and pictures shared help ease the grieving for all his loved ones.

---

**Connie Robbe** - August 19, 2020 at 06:31 PM

DM

“ Prayers for the family of Jr. Hartlage. He was an icon in the cattle industry and will be missed by all.

*Donna McDonald*  
*Navasota Livestock Auction Co.*

---

**Donna McDonald** - August 19, 2020 at 01:10 PM

JM

*Sending prayers and condolences to the Hartlage family..  
a kind and gentle man he was .. we will forever miss JR at Flatonia  
Livestock..*

*The Ronnie Beck Family~  
FLATONIA LIVESTOCK*

---

**Jamie Mikulik** - August 22, 2020 at 01:19 AM

OT

*Junior was always so kind and generous, helping pick show calves for  
us 4-H members and FFA kids for the Fort Bend County Fair, among  
other things.*

*I was lucky enough to win Grand Champion with the steer he and  
Daddy picked for me. Only this week did I realize that happened 20  
years after JR himself took the prize at the same event in the same fair  
20 years earlier, in 1950.*

*After that judge slapped my steer on the back as the winner, I looked  
over to the grandstands to see Daddy and Junior slapping each other  
on the back, beaming with pride.*

*Lots of fond childhood memories with Junior and the Hartlage family,  
dealing with cattle and horses.*

*My heart goes out to you, Robin, Carson, Michael, Tommy and your  
extended families and everyone who loved JR. He certainly loved you.*

*His legacy as a true gentleman, cowboy and great cattleman lives on.*

*Olive Talley  
Dallas*

---

**Olive Talley** - August 22, 2020 at 01:56 PM

LM

*When we first got the ranch across the street from Junior some 20 plus years ago I was as green as spinach when it came to living on a ranch. Jr took me under his wing and taught me everything I needed to know about ranching. From cutting, raking and bailing my own hay, hauling, buying and selling cows at auction to pulling a calf in a thunder storm down pour. Junior, a friend, a mentor and was one rough tough cowboy. With a tear in my eye Junior Hartledge I will miss you. Rest in peace, my friend.*

*Lawrence Mantin*

---

**Lawrence Mantin** - August 24, 2020 at 03:05 PM