

Margaret Avila - 2018

Margaret, is a California native, born in Paso Robles in 1932. Margaret's mother, Marie Bordes, came to this country from France, in 1901. They settled in Colusa, California. Marie Bordes married Joseph Labarere, who came at an early age to the United States, in 1884. Joseph Labarere became a sheep herder, traveling from Reno, Nevada to Los Angeles and made his way north to Bradley, California. He raised sheep and later became a cattle rancher.

Margaret tells of life growing up on the ranch with her mother, step-father and brothers, "My two late brothers, John who lived to be 93, and Henry, who was in the Navy and died in January of 1946, and I were all raised on the Labarere Ranch, originally known as the Alvarado Ranch. The Alvarado Ranch was purchased in 1899. As children, my brothers and I, learned to ride horseback, milk the cows and many other childhood memories. In the summertime, we would walk down to the Salinas River, a place where we learned to swim."

Margaret was educated at San Ardo grammar school, King City High School and Healds Business College in San Francisco. After graduation, she began secretarial work at the Salinas Valley Fair – that's where she met her future husband, Sam Avila. They were married for 55 years. Sam passed away in 2005.

After they were married, Margaret and Sam started ranching at Salispuedas Ranch, which Margaret says translates to "Get Out If You Can!" The Salispuedas Ranch and the Avilas have a substantial history. It was owned by Sam Avila, Sr., whose father, Cipriano "Cip" Avila was a packer and guide. Cip's father, Vincente Avila, had explored the Lucia and Coast country and lands, settling at Salispuedas in 1864.

Margaret and Sam had their first three children there; Linda Padgett, the late Valarie Bassetti, and Joanne Willis. Later on, they added to the family with four more children: Gary Avila, Vivienne DeVaul, Jeff Avila and Sam Avila. By then they had moved to the San Ardo Ranch and, later to the Labarere Ranch, which is now commonly known as the Avila Ranch. It is where Margaret lives today. The family now includes 18 grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren. The whole family was actively involved with both the Salinas Valley Fair and the Mid-State Fair.

Margaret became a member of the Monterey County CattleWomen's in 1965, where she served as President for 2 years; 2nd and 1st Vice President for a total of four years, and Director for many additional years. She has many great memories of those years, "One of my fondest memories of that unit was advocating at the Cow Palace, where Jae Eade and I, along with other Cowbelle members, spoke with 4th and 5th grade students and their teachers from San Francisco about cattle ranching."

Margaret joined the San Luis Obispo CattleWomen's in 1987. She has been a director since 2014 and served on numerous committees including: McLintock's 4th grade field trips, Paso Robles 4th grade Field trips, SLO 4th grade field trips, Cattlemen and Farmer's Day at the Mid-State Fair server, Fashion Show at Madonna Inn and Casino Night. Margaret worked not only at the local level for CattleWomen's, but also at the State level becoming the California State Cattlewomen's President for 2 years, and 2nd and 1st Vice President for four years.

Margaret Avila embodies all that is admirable about the local cattle industry and its people. Margaret says that, "My life with the CattleWomen's has been a long and exciting time. I have visited each unit throughout the state and met many wonderful people along the way, creating lifelong friendships."

The ranches of California's Central Coast produce superior cattle. San Luis Obispo CattleWomen support the local, state and national promotion through beef promotion and education.

Acknowledging her many accomplishments, friendship, dedication, and commitment to the cattle industry, her fellow CattleWomen and Cattlemen and the entire community – it is clear why the San Luis Obispo County CattleWomen have chosen Margaret Avila to be the 2018 CattleWoman of the Year.