

Donald Joseph Gerlach, 59, died Tuesday Jan. 7, 2014, from a heart related incident at his home. He was born July 30, 1954, in Upper Darby, Pa., the fourth of nine children to Mari Josephine and Harry David Gerlach.

He grew up and attended school in Bala Cynwyd, Pa., and worked as a mason and truck driver post high school. He graduated for Penn State Farrier School, which started his life-long love of horses. He moved west to Riverton in 1980, and worked on oil rigs for Exeter Drilling.

On July 9, 1983, he married Arlene Woomer in Zion, Pa., and moved to Gillette, where he worked for Exeter, CS Construction and Powder River Transportation. In 1987, he acquired the Roto Rooter franchise, where he built a successful business until his death.

He loved his sons, Brian and George, and wanted only the best for them both. He was a teacher at heart, especially when it came to riding and skiing. Family reunions were spent skiing at Tahoe, Jackson Hole, Steamboat and the Big Horns, tropical cruises, Hawaii, and trail riding in the Big Horns trying to find Bomber Mountain.

He has been a very supportive member of the Campbell County Horse 4-H Program for 21 years. He was always there to coach a kid, build a trail pattern, or whatever was needed at the moment. His tireless work and devotion will be sorely missed by all the youth and adults in the program. He gave selflessly and never asked for a thing in return.

He kept the 4-H Horse equipment trailer cleaned and stocked and would always move it to the venue it would be needed at next. For the past several years, he took it upon himself to set up the Trail and the Programmed Ride at all of the Progress Shows and County Fair.

He was a wonderful and unique individual who was always ready to help others. Small in stature, he was larger than life—always there with a laugh or hug when you needed it. He volunteered the majority of the manual labor, construction, and heavy equipment responsible for creating and maintaining the Powder Basin Equestrian Park at Cam-plex, which was his second home, and he was very proud of it. He rescued friends (and strangers) in any situation; he was a thoughtful and caring friend.

He has been an active member and organizer of the Powder Basin Equestrian Association and an avid competitor in eventing and hunter/jumper competitions in Wyoming and surrounding states. Everyone knew him at horse shows for his unique style and helpful and positive attitude.

He is survived by his son, Brian David Gerlach of Gillette; mother, Mari Jo Kuhn and stepdad, Robert Kuhn, of Sun City, Fla.; sisters, Mari Jo Grace of Golden Alley, Mass., and Leonide McKay of Benicia, Calif.; brothers, Harry Gerlach of Sweet Home, Okla., John Patrick Gerlach of Parks Burg, Pa., Christopher Gerlach of Broomall, Pa., and Paul Gerlach of Citrus Heights Hills, Calif.; nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his son, George James Gerlach; father, Harry Gerlach; and brother, Edward Gerlach.

In lieu of flowers, The Don Gerlach Memorial Fund has been set up under Powder Basin Equestrian Association for perpetuation of the Equestrian Park (3200 Fitch Dr. Gillette, WY 82718) or to the Campbell County 4-H Horse program.

Memorials and condolences may be sent in Don's name in care of Walker Funeral Home, 410 Medical Arts Court, Gillette, WY 82716. Condolences also may be sent via www.walkerfuneralgillette.com or attached to the obituary on the News Record's website at www.gillettenewsrecord.com.