



Leonard Whitney

February 20, 1921 - October 24, 2015

NAME: Leonard Whitney AGE: 94

RESIDENT OF: Exeter DATE OF DEATH: October 24, 2015

OCCUPATION: Grocery Store Owner PLACE OF DEATH: Exeter

Leonard Whitney

February 20, 1921 – October 24, 2015

Leonard Walter Whitney was born February 20, 1921 to Schuyler and Carrie Whitney, in Yakima, Washington. At the age of 6 months he moved to Exeter, Ca. with his parents, brothers Ernest and Cliff and sister Ethel. Leonard grew up in Exeter, going to school and graduating from Exeter High School.

Leonard's father died when he was a young boy and Leonard worked several jobs to help support his family, including the local Safeway store for mgr. JL Nickel.

Leonard bought his first grocery store in Tulare when he was eighteen. He sold it several years later to join the Army Air Corps during World War II. He was a waist gunner on a B-17, flying 32 missions over Germany and France, including D-Day.

After the war he returned to Exeter and ran into JL Nickel, who was building a store in Woodlake. Leonard went to work for him, then became a partner in what became Nickel's Payless Stores. He married Joyline King in 1945, settled in Woodlake and had two sons, Michael and Greg.

He was very involved in the community of Woodlake and developed the first shopping center in town. He was a city councilman, volunteer fireman and a fire commissioner. He was a charter member of the Woodlake Lions Club, its first president and the first rodeo chairman of the Woodlake Lions Rodeo. He loved sharing his ranch and his horses with everyone, especially children, hosting Junior rodeos and letting people learn to ride. He also loved a celebration and many people, charities and organizations benefited from his hospitality at the "Whitney Barn".

Over the years his business grew to include not only the Nickel's Payless Stores, but Best Buy Market in Visalia, Food King Markets in Hanford, Lemoore and Parlier, and Foodland in Porterville. In 1977 he married Barbara Shirk, and they were together until her death in 2008. His next venture was into a new type of operation with the Food 4 Less stores he opened in Visalia, Hanford, Fresno, Clovis and Bakersfield. In 2001 he decided to attend his horses and ranch full time and left the grocery business, but could not stay away and opened B n L Quality Meats in 2013, which he owned and still participated in until his death.

His word was his bond. His honesty and integrity were of utmost importance to him. His passion was his work in the grocery industry and his animals, especially his dogs.

He helped many people in a lot of ways and his presence will be missed in business, in the horse community and among the large group of friends that he touched over the years.

He was preceded in death by his mother, father, two brothers, a sister, son Michael and his wife Barbara. He is survived by his son, Greg (Karen), stepsons Eric Shirk, Jeff Shirk, and Greg Shirk, 11 grandchildren, 7 great grandchildren and many nieces and nephews.

A funeral service will be held on Monday, November 2, 2015 at 9:00 a.m. at First Assembly Church in Visalia, CA. Following the service burial will take place at Exeter District Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers donations may be made to: Central Valley Rescue Railroad,

(a non- profit, no kill, dog rescue facility) PO box 44, Lindsay, Ca, 93247
A memorial tribute may be offered by logging onto www.salseranddillard.com

Previous Events

Service

NOV 2. 9:00 AM (PT)

Visalia First Assembly of God
3737 S Akers St
Visalia, CA 93277

Tribute Wall

PW

“ Greg & Karen & Family: We are so sorry for your loss. Leonard was so well-respected in Woodlake. I know my dad really enjoyed the Thursday night poker games after the Lions meetings. May your memories be sweet! Pam & Danny Wallace

Pam Wallace - November 24, 2015 at 10:20 PM

DC

“ We loved this man so much, he always had a smile and a word for James and me, no mater if he was busy or not, Resting with the Angels now, prayers for the family....James and Debbie Coleman

Debbie Coleman - November 01, 2015 at 07:24 PM

DF

“ Dewey & Shirley Atchison and family purchased the Heavenly Heights Bouquet for the family of Leonard Whitney.



Dewey & Shirley Atchison and family - October 31, 2015 at 10:07 AM

AC

“ Greg, Karen, Missy and the Shirk family, May the love of friends and family carry through your grief. He was an amazing man and loved by many. May he rest in peace. Love, and God bless you. always,
Alice Castello

alice castello - October 30, 2015 at 10:12 PM

KM

“ There doesn't seem enough words to convey the sadness we feel about the passing of such a wonderful man. Greg, losing a parent at any age isn't easy. Please know we will say extra prayers for you and your family. Debi I pray that the memories you made taking care of Leonard will always be your coat of comfort in the coming days. You guys gave him the most honorable gift of all... your time, and your love. God Bless you both. Much Love,



Kevin and Vicki Manlove - October 30, 2015 at 06:25 PM

SH

“ Leonard would always speak to you anytime he saw you. He was such a great man and his contributions to Woodlake was such as no one else. He will always be remembered by me as a great man. Sheila Hartman



Sheila Hartman - October 29, 2015 at 12:52 PM