



Marguerite Gies is pictured holding a copy of "Colorado Hereford Heritage," a book released in 1990 that's dedicated to Hereford history in the Centennial State. Gies helped put together and publish the book.

Herefords: *A Love Affair*

Marguerite Gies was recently recognized by the Colorado Hereford Women for her lifetime commitment to the Hereford breed.

by **Eric Brown**

If there are two things quickly learned during discussions with Marguerite Gies, they're that one breed of cattle sits closer to her heart than any other, and, above all, she hasn't spent her life standing still — not at all.

"And you know," begins the Eaton, Colo.-area resident, now in her early 90s, leaning forward at her dining room table with a somewhat mischievous look on her face like she has a secret to tell. "I've still got some spunk left."

It would take plenty of "spunk" serving in all of the capacities in which Gies has served during her long life, which also have consisted of fulfilling duties out on a family ranch dotted with Herefords — the breed she loves more than any other.

The last of her many roles over the years she finally let go of earlier this month — her post as secretary of the Colorado Hereford Auxiliary, a position she has served in since 1970, when she helped found the organization.

After so many years, it was a recent blood clot in her lung and numerous

subsequent hospital visits that led to Gies finally convincing herself it was time to slow down, she says.

However, the auxiliary didn't let Gies resign from those responsibilities quietly, as they honored her during a luncheon held at the Eaton Country Club on March 14.

"It was such a wonderful surprise," Gies says. "And it meant so much to me."

The dedication to Gies was an honor well deserved according to current auxiliary members.

In addition to helping establish the Colorado Hereford Auxiliary and serving as its secretary since the organization began, Gies was the first president of the group, was a founding member of the American Hereford Women (AHW), served as that group's first president, was an advisor for the junior Hereford association, was named an AHW Woman of the Year, joined the Weld County Cattlewomen in 1955 and also helped spearhead her family's Hereford business.

"She's just a remarkable person," says Marlene Sidwell, a board member for the Colorado Hereford Auxiliary, an organization dedicated to promoting Herefords to the cattle-buying public and educating future leaders of the Hereford breed, doing so through a variety of activities and programs, including scholarships. "It's amazing how much time, and money, she devoted to these organizations. You just can't say enough about her."

Additionally, Gies has been a researcher of the state's Hereford industry, leading efforts in putting together and publishing "Colorado Hereford Heritage," a 200-plus-page book released in 1990, dedicated to the breed's history in the Centennial State.

Sitting in her home east of Eaton — just down the road from the ranch where she grew up — Gies reflected fondly on her years with the organizations, specifically on how her involvement with the AHW allowed her to travel to 13 other countries. She noted that those journeys were bittersweet because her husband, Harold, was too sick to join her then — even though the two had saved up money their entire married lives to one day do such traveling together.

Harold Gies — "a city boy," as Marguerite describes him, who, too, fell in love with the Hereford breed and helped operate the family ranch in addition to operating businesses in Greeley and is still the "kindest" man she ever met — died of pancreatic cancer in 1982.

Gies says her lifelong commitment to local, state and national Hereford and ag education organizations began when her son, Jim, started showing the breed with Eaton's FFA chapter. But her love for Herefords goes back even further than that to her youth, as her father raised those cattle.

As Gies will tell you, Hereford bulls are more docile than others and are productive for longer, among other positive characteristics.

"They're just wonderful animals," says Gies, who still lives on her own at the family ranch with assistance from family and medical professionals. The ranch is operated by Jim, who works full-time with the *Western Livestock Journal* near Denver. "I'm happy to have dedicated so much of my life to such wonderful animals." **HW**