

## Sons of Wyo pioneer ranch families die

By **CANDY MOULTON**  
*Star-Tribune correspondent*

ENCAMPMENT — The sons of two prominent Wyoming pioneer ranch families died this week.

Services for Bernard Sun, 75, were held Saturday at St. Anthony's Catholic Church in Casper, while services for William J. Day, 76, will be held at 2 p.m. Monday at University Park United Methodist Church in Denver.

Bernard Sun was the son of Tom and Ellen Sun. He spent his entire life living and working on the Sun Ranch, which straddles Natrona and Carbon Counties near Devil's Gate.

Founded by his grandfather Tom De Beau Soliel (Tom Sun) in 1872, the portion of the ranch which Bernard and his children operated remains in family ownership.

In addition to ranching the elder Tom Sun was involved in timbering and mining activities in southern Carbon County and he helped lay out the townsite

for Grand Encampment in 1896. Tom Sun Jr. took over management of the Sun Ranch — the Hub and Spoke — in the early 1900s and through the years the family acquired other properties including the Turkey Track Ranch, The Bar Eleven Ranch, The 66 Ranch, The Diamond Hook Ranch, Separation, The Jawbone, Bell Springs Ranch, Bill Grieve Ranch, and a portion of the Green Mountain Sheep Company. The expansion of the ranching operation spread it over four counties: Natrona, Carbon, Fremont and Sweetwater.

Some of the Sun Ranch was sold in the 1990s to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, including the homestead built by Tom Sun Sr. in 1872. But Bernard Sun, his wife, Nolene, and children, Tena, Joe and Tom, continued their operations on a portion of the Sun Ranch properties.

Bernard Sun was born Nov. 20, 1923, in Casper to Tom and Ellen (Lynch). He had three brothers, Thomas, George and

John, and one sister, Adelaide. On Oct. 22, 1955, he married Nolene Esponda in Buffalo. He is survived by his wife and three children.

William J. Day was born Nov. 11, 1923 to Erwin and Viola Day. He was the grandson of Natrona County pioneers Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Mokler. He attended school in Casper, and graduated from Natrona County High School in 1942.

Day earned a football scholarship to the University of Colorado, but served in the 11th Airborne Division in the South Pacific during World War II, earning the Bronze Star for his actions in combat and the Soldiers Medal for his role in saving the life of a fellow paratrooper.

Following the war, he married Winifred Pritchett and attended the Colorado School of Mines. He completed his degree in engineering at North Carolina State University and subsequently began a career with General Electric in Schenectady, N.Y. He returned to the military.

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