



## **Maudeen Martha Marks**

**1918-2009**

Maudeen Martha Marks passed away at her ranch in Bandera Friday, March 20. She was born on April 2, 1918, at the family home in Barker to Maud and Emil H. Marks, who preceded her in death. A prominent resident of Harris County, Miss Maudeen was known for her public relations work with the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo and Salt Grass Trail. Additionally, she was a lifetime member of the Texas Longhorn Breeders Association, actively ranching in both Barker and Bandera. She is survived by her sister Atha Dimon of Barker and Runge, and a host of nieces and nephews, great-nieces and nephews, great-great nieces and nephews and great-great-great nieces and nephews, as well as numerous other relatives. Miss Maudeen also leaves behind a bounty of friends. She was also preceded in death by two brothers, Emory Marks and Travis Marks. Pallbearers were be Milo Marks, Jon E. Marks, Blevins Bundick, Leonard Steffens, Eugene Vaughan, Travis Marks Jr., Clayton Vaughan and Kevin

Bundick. Honorary pallbearers include Stephen A. "Rusty" Marks, United States Congressman John Culberson and fifteen great nieces and nephews. A remembrance gathering for Miss Maudeen's many friends in Bandera was held Saturday, April 4, at the LH-7 Ranch.

Memorial gifts may be made to the Maud Marks Library, 1815 Westgreen Boulevard, Katy 77450.



## **Maudeen – dancing with the stars**

**By Stephanie Parker**

"My idea of heaven," Bandera's pioneer longhorn rancher Maudeen Marks once said, "would be to own Texas, stock it with Texas longhorn cattle, staff it with Texas Rangers, ride from windmill to windmill and have a dance every night." Here's hoping that Marks, who died on Friday, March 20, just shy of her 91st birthday, is now

two steppin' across the Milky Way. In life, she collected everything longhorn – from jewelry, sculptures, paintings and hides and historic memorabilia inside her LH7 Ranch in Bandera to the beloved purebred longhorn cattle grazing in her pastures. As a pioneer rancher, Marks was never deterred from her mission to save Texas longhorn cattle from extinction. Heart and soul, Marks was consumed by her quest to maintain the purity of Texas' native cattle. Still hand feeding the immense critters at age 86, even while recovering from a broken hip, Marks explained her longhorn passion by praising their intelligence. "I've seen them straddle a sapling," she explained, "and walk it to the ground so they can eat the top. They use their horns to shred brush. I've seen them climb a tree with their front feet to eat moss. Longhorns can get through any fence. You have to keep them happy to keep them at home." At age 88, Marks was still keeping her longhorns happy – a Herculean task due to a continued severe drought. Waving the drought aside, she commented on the cattle's survival instincts. "The longhorn is nature's product, not man's. If they sent animals to the moon, they'd be longhorns and they'd probably find water on Mars, too. They paw for water and reach for anything green." Maudeen Martha Marks was born in Barker on April 2, 1918. Her father, Emil Henry Marks, had established the LH7 Ranch in western Harris County in 1907. In 1923, he handpicked longhorns for a select herd to keep the Texas breed alive. His 500

purebred longhorns brought Emil Marks recognition as having one of the nation's finest and largest herds of the iconic cattle. He earned the distinction of being named as one of "Seven Families of Texas Longhorns," an honor that passed on to his daughter after his death.

The purity of the breed, which Emil Marks registered in 1898, was certified by Texas A&M. In fact, A&M's longhorn database is formulated from genetic information extracted from the LH7 herd. Emil kept the ranch until his death in 1969, continuing the ranching tradition in the shadow of Houston's ever-encroaching high-rise buildings. He instituted annual rodeos and trail rides to the Houston Livestock Show. The Texas Historical Commission designated Houston's LH7 Ranch as a state archeological landmark in 1985. While Emil left an archeological landmark in Houston, he bequeathed something more important to his daughter — a passion for longhorns. "My father believed that these cattle should be preserved," Marks explained, "because they have qualities and characteristics of survivability that might be needed sometime in the future." After their father's death Marks and her brother, Travis, split Emil's herd and ranching operations. After looking at 97 ranches, Marks finally settled in Bandera County in 1982, keeping the LH7 name and brand. Marks quickly became a Bandera icon. She operated a guest ranch, led trail rides and participated in local parades. The tributes never ceased. In 2007, the Bandera County Chamber of Commerce Directors presented Marks with the Wilton

Crider Cowboy Preservation Award Cowboy Capital Award. She also received the Jack Phillips Award from the Texas Longhorn Breeders Association of America. Her longhorns won rows of top-placing ribbons and "Twisty Cheerleader" was the one thousandth Texas Longhorn to cross the ring of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. Additionally, February 25, 2003, was proclaimed "Maudeen Marks Day in Harris County." In spite of all these accolades, Marks was most proud of becoming an inspector for the Cattleman's Texas Longhorn Registry and having a longhorn named after her. Her biggest fear was not death; it was that no one would continue the fight to maintain the purity of Texas longhorns. "I can be replaced," she said in 2004, while recovering from a fall. "It's not these broken bones that hurt, it's my heart. Who will carry on?" In 2008, the LH7 purebred longhorn herd celebrated their 110th anniversary.