

Citation

Born in 1933, Polly is the daughter of Blanche and Don Collins. She grew up at Collins Ranch near Kit Carson, Colorado riding horseback, checking pastures, and working cattle. Polly graduated from Kit Carson High School in 1952, and continued her education at Colorado A&M becoming a third generation graduate when she completed her degree in 1956.

During her time at Colorado A&M, Polly kept busy with Livestock Club, Block and Bridle Club and the Delta Delta Delta Sorority. She was also the Livestock Judging Team's first female judge. After graduation, she was employed by the Arizona National Livestock Show in Phoenix, Arizona. It was in Arizona where she met Rogers Johnson. They were married on the Collins Ranch in 1959, but returned back to Phoenix where their children Scott, Don, Jody, and Toby were born.

Together, Polly and her family moved to the Collins Ranch in 1970, and became the farm's newest managers. For the past 38 years, Polly has been owner, manager, and president of Collins Ranch Co., a 40,000 acre cattle ranch which runs 1,000 head of cattle. This ranch has been in Polly's family for 101 years. Her grandfather, Charles E. Collins, bought the ranch in 1907. The ranch initially ran steers from Texas, Arizona, and Mexico. Often numbering 8,000 head, it was a thrilling sight to witness that many steers running down the banks of the Big Sandy River. While Polly had a major hand in continuing the success of the Collins Ranch, she also found time to serve on the CSU Alumni Board of Directors and the Cheyenne County Hospital Board. She is also active in the Kit Carson Methodist Church, Kit Carson Historical Society, Kit Carson Rural Development, and continues to attend CSU football games and other events. Being a member of her local Colorado Cattlewomen's organization, Colorado Cattlemen's Association and National Cattlemen's Association round out her extensive list of community and industry support. Even with a busy schedule, she makes ample time for her 13 grandchildren. She enjoys following them to their many athletic games and events.

Five generations of the Collins-Johnson family have woven their lives around the success of their ranch. The Collins Ranch has not only brought them joy and pride, but it's been a pillar of the local community and the Colorado ranching industry as a whole. Polly is a pivotal part of this legacy. She is a pioneer of her generation, a leader of her time, and an honorable recipient of the 2008 Livestock Leader award.

The Department of Animal Sciences is proud to honor Polly as our newest Livestock Leader, recognizing her longstanding service and commitment to Colorado State University and the ranching industry in Colorado. Polly's and her late husband Rogers legacy has been an exemplary example of a combination of the ranching business and a "way of life" to have their children fully engaged in the family ranching business.

Polly Johnson

for the 2008 Livestock Leader Award