

Chester Lee Reeve



Truly, a tall man left our midst in the death of C. Lee Reeve, September 15th. Not tall in the physical sense, though he was lithe and willowy. He was tall in the sense of character, citizenship, leadership and personality. "Chet" or "C. Lee", as his friends affectionately called him, thought tall and walked tall among his fellowmen.

A native Finney Countian, Chet was born September 3, 1892. He lived just twelve days over man's allotted three-score and ten years. He was educated in Garden City Schools and graduated from Kansas State University. Chet once turned down the opportunity to join the faculty of a West Coast University. Rather, he chose, with the help of his family, to follow a life of ranching.

He married Lois Mabel Reed in 1918. After her death in 1940, he resided at the Warren Hotel. Chet exemplified the character of the west storied and fabled in books and on T.V. screens. He was always well dressed in western clothes. They graced his personal appearance like a gray flannel suit worn by an eastern executive. Known by cattlemen far and wide, he was a keen judge of both men and cattle. He displayed a superior insight into hopes and ambitions of other people and he was always their champion. He sought no favors for himself - he sought favors for others.

His was a life of service in many ways, to his church, to his neighbors, and to his community. A long-time member of Garden City Co-op, he was elected to the Board of Directors in 1949, succeeded to the Vice Presidency in 1955, and Presidency in 1959. He chose not to be a candidate for re-election at the Annual Meeting in 1959 whereupon the membership overwhelmingly elected him Honorary Board Member with life-time tenure.

He was a long-time member of Garden City Production Credit Association and was elected to that Board of Directors in 1952, a position he held at the time of his death. In the earlier years of that association, he served an interval as a Field Appraiser, exercising his cattle judging talent. He served as an Alternate on the Executive Committee and Loan Committee. His colleagues recognized his optimistic thinking and realized his keen sense of values did not entail money but rather people.

Chet sparked the organization of Equity Federal Credit Union and served on its Board of Directors. He was an Elder in the Presbyterian Church. Affable and easy-going, his judgment and advice were always in demand. His pipe was his trademark, and often in board meetings, he would punctuate a statement with a wave of his pipe.

The esteem with which he was regarded and the character of his life is best summed up in a statement made a few years ago by a businessman member of his church, "He is the finest Christian gentleman I have ever met."

