

Generosity Over Generations

By Cori Wittman

Our family recently celebrated the 95th birthday of my grandfather: faith-filled farmer, rancher, pilot, inventor, woodworker and, perhaps most importantly, generous giver. As we celebrated his decades of building and passing down this rich legacy, I was amazed at the impact his life and sustained generosity has had on my parents' generation, my generation (the "grands"), and undoubtedly on the generation of ankle-biting "greats" that kept us entertained at the party.

For Grandpa, generosity has never been simply a rule to follow or one of a long list of values to tout. It hasn't been a way of getting his name in the papers or feeling good about himself. I believe his generosity stems from his faith, a deeply rooted humility, and a commitment to serve rather than be served, no matter the circumstance.

Grandpa's generosity wasn't predicated on, nor limited by, the state of the economy, the farm's financial position, the number of kids he and grandma were sending off to school, or his (lack of) spare time. The method of expressing his generosity may have varied throughout the decades based on those conditions, but his commitment to it never did.

This grand celebration of his 95 years left me re-energized to find ways that I, my family and our farm can commit to carrying on this legacy no matter our circumstances. The question is not if, but how, we will choose to live generously in our generation.