

wife Jo. That simple gesture grew into a lifetime of love, adventure, partnership, and three wonderful children.

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### *A Cowboy with a Soft Side*

Wayne was a strong man—everyone who knew him could testify to that—but his soft side always showed when it mattered most, especially to his daughter Andrea. Wayne’s soft spot from the very beginning. He was endlessly proud of the young woman she became, especially when it came to her horsemanship. Together, they practiced countless hours, side by side, shaping a partnership between horse and rider that would one day carry her all the way to High School Nationals. Wayne was with her throughout the journey, offering guidance, grit, and the kind of encouragement only a dad like him could give. He loved watching her barrel race...the speed, the precision, the fire in her, because he knew just how much heart she poured into it. And beyond the arena, Wayne was so happy she found an amazing husband who treats her so well. No matter how grown she was, no matter how far she rode, Andrea was always his little girl.

His quiet protective nature showed through when one night, a man picked the wrong cowboy to tangle with. The tension was obvious, and Andrea sensed it instantly. She rushed to Wayne’s side and gently told him it was time to head home. Wayne, never one to make a scene in front of his daughter, fired back with his quick wit:

“Go check on the generator in the back of the pickup.”

It was the perfect example of who he was: tough enough to end trouble in an instant, gentle enough to shield his daughter from ever having to see it.

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### *A Legacy Larger Than Life*

Wayne lived loudly, loved deeply, danced proudly, and sign-language-commanded with more passion than any rancher before him. His presence filled every room, every pasture, every family gathering. He leaves behind stories that will be told for generations. Stories too wild to be fiction and too heartfelt to ever be forgotten.

Though his boots may be empty, his legacy is not. It lives on in his family, in his music, in every two-step danced in his honor.

*May he dance on.*

*May he play on.*

*May he guide us (with or without hand signals) from above.*

Scan the code  
to view Wayne’s  
Celebration of Life  
Tribute video.



## **In Loving Memory of Wayne Martin Hatzenbuehler**

### ***“The Sign Language Master” • “The Two-Stepping King”***

Wayne Martin Hatzenbuehler was born on June 5, 1953, to Ralph Hatzenbuehler and Florentine (Mosbrucker) Hatzenbuehler, and from that moment on, the world had no idea the whirlwind it was about to experience. He went on to live a larger-than-life story—one even the best authors and filmmakers would envy. His final moments were spent doing exactly what he loved: leaning out the window of his side-by-side and making an extraordinary shot at a coyote on the run across his ranch in Solen, North Dakota. If every one of his adventures became an episode, we’d be looking at a ten-year Netflix series. Wayne’s legendary life came to a peaceful close on December 4, 2025 at the age of 72 in Sanford Hospital, surrounded by his loving family.

Wayne is survived by the only force on earth capable of slowing him down long enough to appreciate the little things: his beautiful wife, Pam (Patchen) Hatzenbuehler. If Superman had kryptonite, Wayne had Pam, and he wouldn’t have wanted it any other way. He is also survived by his mother, Florentine Hatzenbuehler; his daughter, Andrea Miller (Don); his sons, Cole Hatzenbuehler and Lee Hatzenbuehler (Brittney Helm); and his treasured grandchildren: Shaynee, Clayne, Sterling, Steeley, and Coyle. He also leaves behind his sisters Darlene Froelich, Nita Reiniets (Jim), Lenore Frank (Dan), and Lisa Davidson (Mick); brother Roger Hatzenbuehler (Pauline); in-laws Marc and Jo Patchen and Janel Patchen; along with a massive extended family of nieces, nephews, and loving friends!

He is preceded in death by his father Ralph Hatzenbuehler; sister Lucille; brother Patrick; brother-in-law Larry Froelich; father and mother-in-law Dick and Jerry Patchen; and brother-in-law Rick Patchen.

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### ***A Life That Filled the Room—and the Dance Floor***

With a family this large and friends too numerous to count, weddings were frequent, and Wayne made the dance floors unforgettable. His two-stepping was legendary, his rhythm unmatched, and his ability to glide across the dance floor left the rest of us wondering if he’d secretly trained in Hollywood between ranch chores. He always made sure to pull his wife, his mother and his sisters onto the dance floor...never missing an opportunity to share the moment with the women he loved.

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### ***The Music Man***

Long before his cowboy years, Wayne quietly taught himself to play the guitar (the gift of music inherited from his mother’s Mosbrucker roots and later passed down to his son Lee). His sister Nita still recalls the sound of House of the Rising Sun drifting through the walls of their childhood home. She laughs remembering the time he entered a singing contest and was genuinely puzzled when he got second place.

## ***The Ranch Boss with a Language All His Own***

Helping Wayne on the ranch was a rite of passage, one filled with equal parts admiration and fear. Not fear of messing up the plan (because, as everyone knows, the plan changes instantly when cattle are involved), but fear of missing one of Wayne’s famous hand gestures. His unique blend of sign language, finger-flailing, and eyebrow telepathy remains unmatched. Many swear it required an IQ over 130 to decipher. Looking back, handheld radios probably would have saved everyone ... but then again, the chaos was half the fun.

Wayne was known for his spotless machinery, his tough-as-nails grit, and his uncanny ability to turn even the roughest land into a cowboy’s paradise. But perhaps the part of ranch life Wayne cherished most was the partnership he built with his son, Cole. Day after day, side by side, the two of them worked the land, made decisions together, and operated as a team in a way only a father and son with unspoken understanding can. Although Wayne carried himself as a tough, no-nonsense, man’s-man (one who didn’t often say the quiet things out loud) his pride in Cole was unmistakable. Anyone who watched them together could see it in the way Wayne deferred to Cole’s judgment, the way he lit up at a job well done on the ranch or in the arena, and the way he simply enjoyed having his son by his side. Their bond was built in dust, sweat, early mornings, late nights, and the kind of trust that can’t be taught. It was one of the greatest joys of Wayne’s life, even if he never quite said it that way. Their partnership was the heartbeat of the ranch.

And while Cole took the lead on the land itself, Lee brought a different kind of help—one Wayne depended on more than he’d ever admit, and was always asking when Lee was coming home. Lee loved working on machinery, which worked out perfectly since Cole did not enjoy that aspect as much. Whenever Lee had a day off, he looked forward to heading to the ranch, rolling up his sleeves, and tackling whatever mechanical puzzle Wayne had waiting. Those were their special days: elbows deep in grease, sharing stories, laughing, fixing the unfixable, and building a bond through bolts and busted parts. Wayne’s pride in Lee reached far beyond ranch work—he admired the career Lee built, the independence he earned, the passion he put into his food at branding, and the home he worked hard to buy. Though Wayne wasn’t a man who spoke such things aloud, everyone around him knew how proud he was of both his sons.

Not everyone knows Wayne once held a “real job.” At the urging of his brother-in-law Dan, Wayne worked for a blacktop company—an entire three weeks! What a treat that must have been for his employer.

He always loved big, tall horses, and his good buddy Wally Schott once found him one large enough: Judd, straight from California. Together in the early ’80s, Wayne and Judd earned the title of runner-up in the Standing Rock Rodeo Association. But Wayne’s love of speed didn’t end with horses; he also chased thrills on motorcycles, cars, snowmobiles, and, of course, pretty girls.

Luckily, one pretty girl—Pam—paused long enough for Wayne to catch her. Their story began at the Lazy M Bar, with two shots sent over by two cowboys and delivered by bartender Marc, Pam’s brother, to Pam and Marc’s soon to be

On the 8th day God looked down from Heaven and saw what He'd made was good but there was still something missing.

He needed a caretaker – someone to steward His livestock.

### **So God made a Rancher**

God said, "I need someone willing to rise before the sun to saddle cold backed horses, eager to throw a leg up on the day! Someone who will face fear and disappointment with a smile and quick wit.

### **So God made a Rancher**

I need someone who will face uncertainty with a strong back but a soft heart. Someone who will drive the long miles with a lump in their throat but faith in their heart as all their work comes down to this one day at the sale barn.

### **So God made a Rancher**

God said, "I need someone willing to put the livestock's needs even above their own. Someone who will get up and feed critters often before themselves. Someone who will move aside all the pretty shampoos and soaps to soak a calf in the bathtub praying this one makes it."

God knew He needed someone willing to bend low and breath life into the slimy mouth of a newborn lamb without hesitation. Someone who will give every ounce of themselves to save a baby calf, shed a quick tear when they don't make it and pick themselves up knowing others still need them.

### **So God made a Rancher**

God had to have someone who would work all day to bale hay before the storm hits only to spend all night helping a neighbor fight fire from the dry lightning. Then pat the neighbor on the back and be grateful it wasn't worse.

It had to be someone who was willing to look you in the eye as they shake your hand. Someone who would take pride in their work and always finish what they start. Someone willing to do what has to be done and make a promise and keep it.

### **So God made a Rancher**

Someone who could hold a family together through long hours and little time off but who knows full well they're called to this life. Someone who would smile, and then sigh, when their son or daughter looks up at them and says, "I want to spend my life doing what you and dad do."

### **So God made a Rancher**

### **Parish Rosary & Parish Vigil**

Thursday, December 11, 2025; 6:00 PM

**Presider**

Deacon Randy Frohlich

**Funeral Liturgy**

Friday, December 12, 2025; 1:00 PM  
St. Joseph Catholic Church, Mandan, ND

**Celebrant**

Fr. Josh Waltz

**Musicians**

Jackie Stewart & Patsy Hertz

**Casketbearers**

Don Miller, Steve Weinberger, Brandon Leingang  
Jason Frank, Cash Davidson, & Chris Hugh

**Honorary Casketbearers**

Travis Hatzenbuehler, Aaron Patchen, Dan Miller  
Trapper Rieniets, Larry Umber  
Conrad Anderson, & Bryce Vegan

**Lectors**

Nita Rieniets & Jamie Amundson

Prelude

*"On Eagles Wings"*

Processional Song

*"Here I am, Lord"*

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*Liturgy of the Word*

Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 25:6a, 7-9

Response

Psalms 23

*"Though I walk through the valley of darkness, I will fear no evil, for you are with me."*

New Testament Reading

1st Thessalonians 4:13-18

Gospel Reading

Matthew 5:1-12a

Homily

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*Liturgy of the Eucharist*

Preparation of Gifts Song

*"One Bread, One Body"*

Presentation of Gifts

Shaynee, Clayne, Sterling, Steeley, & Coyle

Eucharistic Prayer

Communion Songs

*"Amazing Grace"* & *"The Old Rugged Cross"*

Communion Meditation

Final Commendation

*"Song of Farewell"*

Closing Song

*"Be Not Afraid"*

**Committal Service**

**2:30 PM at Fairview Cemetery**  
Bismarck, North Dakota

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*The family invites you for food & fellowship at the Mandan Eagles,  
1400 Collins Avenue, immediately following the burial service.*

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