

THE OBSERVER/ENTERPRISE

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Obituaries



McCutchen

Melinda Lee Barrett McCutchen was welcomed into the loving arms of her Savior at 11:57 am on March 16, 2023, at home in Bronte after a courageous battle with cancer. Melinda faced this battle like she faced life; with great grit, great grace, and great faith.

Melinda was born to the late Cliff and Mary Barrett on August 21, 1962, in Pueblo, Colorado. Mom always joked that although she wasn't born in Texas, she got here as fast as she could. She was the beloved late in life baby of her parents and the apple of her big sister, Meredith's, eye. The Barretts moved to Bronte in the early 1970's where Melinda graduated valedictorian in 1980. Melinda was attending Angelo State University when she met the love of her life, Wayne McCutchen, while she was buying a horse. Dad standing by while Mom purchased animals would go on to be a common theme of their over 40 years of marriage. Melinda and Wayne welcomed their daughter Morgan in 1985 and Ashley in 1987. After moving from San Angelo to Mertzon, Knickerbocker, and

Harper, the family finally settled back in Bronte in 1989. They moved out to the ranch in 1995 where Melinda renovated the old rock house into a warm and cozy home where they made plenty of memories.

Melinda took great pride in being a fantastic horsewoman. She was tougher than nails and could ride circles around most men. She was involved in the World Foundation Quarter Horse Alliance, Foundation Quarter Horse Registry, Coke County Roping Club, and helped organize many ranch rodeos and playdays. Melinda was instrumental in starting two western magazines, Hoofprints and The Foundation Quarter Horse Review. Melinda began working at the Observer/Enterprise with Hal Spain when the girls were small and purchased the OE in 2011. Melinda was an accomplished writer who even published her novel "The Greatest Lie" in 2012. She was also extremely successful at real estate and truly enjoyed meeting people and helping them find the perfect patch of land.

Melinda was extremely loyal, generous, hardworking, dependable, and lots of fun to

be around. She loved to spend time with her family, be outside with her animals, garden, and travel with Wayne. Melinda loved a good trip and was a wonderful travel partner even if it was just a quick trip to Angelo with the girls to run errands.

The thing Melinda would want to most emphasize is the importance of her faith in Jesus. Melinda spent countless hours praying, studying scripture, and listening to sermons. She radiated the love of Jesus and made sure that people knew about Him and His never-ending love for them.

Melinda will be greatly missed by her husband, Wayne; and her two daughters, Morgan McCutchen, and Ashley (and husband Reese) Braswell, all of Bronte. Melinda relished her role as "Gigi" to her two precious grandchildren, Lucy and Luke Braswell. Left with decades of fond memories are her sister, Meredith Jackson of McKinney, and numerous nephews, nieces, cousins, and friends.

Pallbearers were Dave Jackson, Jon Jackson, Cliff Jackson, Reese Braswell, Bartley Murray, and Noah Murray. Honorary Pallbearers were Hal Spain, Mike McCutchen, Robert Mathers, and Russell Johnson.

A celebration of life was held Monday, March 20, at 2 pm at the Bronte Church of Christ with graveside services following at Fairview Cemetery in Bronte. A visitation took place that morning from 9 am to 12 pm at the Bronte Church of Christ. Donations in Melinda's memory can be made to the Bronte Volunteer Fire Department, East Coke County EMS, Robert Lee Volunteer Fire Department and West Coke County EMS.

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American Idol, Part 2: Tragic and Alone

By James M. Decker

The ending of John Ford's epic 1956 "The Searchers" is one of the most famous scenes in Western film. John Wayne portrays Ethan Edwards, a Civil War veteran who spends years hunting his niece Debbie, who was abducted as a child by Comanche raiders. After a bloody battle, Ethan removes Debbie from the Comanches and he delivers her to those she knew as a child.

In the final moments of the film, everyone walks into the house, except for Ethan. The great Sons of the Pioneers sing "ride away, ride away, ride away..." Ethan watches the others for a moment and stares into the house. Then, he turns away. As he strides back towards his horse, the door swings shut and the screen goes black.

It is incredible filmmaking. It is also terribly sad. Ethan Edwards

turns his hunt for his niece (and his hatred for the Comanche people) into an obsession. That obsession leads him to do some brutal things during the film. He devotes his life to finding his niece, and he does, but he loses more than a little of his humanity along the way. His choices leave him alone in the end. In the final scene, Ford depicts a man who is unwilling to join his friends and loved ones. The spirit of family and community is either no longer within him or he feels unworthy of that spirit.

The Western is sometimes criticized as shallow, two-dimensional storytelling. In part, that comes from judging the genre by the lowest common denominator. As I mentioned last time, the Western is rife with unimaginative, formulaic, and fantastical plots. But those are not the ONLY stories told in the Western. Films like "The Searchers" tell complex narratives with more than a few shades of gray between black and white. On the surface, it is easy to look at Ethan Edwards and see a bold, daring, heroic figure. He was the archetype of the "rugged individualist" unafraid to face challenges and set out alone. In the end, John Ford shows the potential sadness, too.

I have written in the past about the perils of "rugged

Area Churches Invite You to Worship

Bronte

Bronte Church of Christ

PO Box 346
118 S. Jefferson • Bronte
Sun. 10 am & 6 pm, Wed. 7 pm

Central Baptist Church

324 S. Franklin • Bronte
(325) 473-4811
Dale Patterson, Pastor
Sun. 10 am Sunday School
11 am & 5 pm Worship

First Baptist Church

424 S. Washington • Bronte
(325) 473-2331
firstbronte@gmail.com
Pastor George Cooper
Sunday 9:45 am Sunday School,
10:30 am Worship
Wednesday 6 pm - 8 pm
Children and Youth

First United Methodist Church

Corner of Washington & Holmes
Bronte • (325) 650-4836
Sun. 11:00 am Worship

St. James Catholic Church

215 N. Washington, Bronte
(325) 365-2687

Rev. Timothy Hayter, Pastor

Sunday Bilingual Mass 8 am

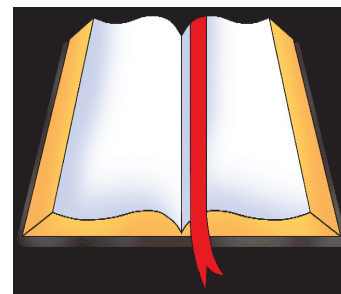
4C Cowboy Church

Drawer R • Bronte • (325) 895-4080
Robert Lemmond, Pastor
Sunday, 10:30 am - Texas Theater
Wednesday Bible Study 6 pm -
4C Feedlot Youth Building

Coke County

Pecan Baptist

PO Box 542 • 12 miles West of
Robert Lee on Sterling City Hwy
(325) 453-2065, Bill Hood, Pastor
www.pecanbaptistchurchrl.com
Sun. 10 am, Sunday School
11 am & 7 pm, Worship



Robert Lee

Bible Baptist Church

PO Box 938 • 9th & Austin
Sunday 10 am Sunday School,
11 am and 5 pm Worship,
Wed 5 pm Bible Study

Emmanuel Pentecostal

PO Box 794 • 1004 Hillcrest
Pastor Brantly Robertson
(972) 841-2009

Sundays 10 am, Wednesdays 7 pm

First United Methodist Church

PO Box 144 • 9th & Chadbourne
Robert Lee • (325) 453-2417
Cyndi Weidner, Pastor

Sun. 10 am Sunday School
11 am Worship,
5 pm Choir Practice

Iglesia Bautista Betel

101 Houston • Robert Lee
Sun. 9:45 am • Sunday School
11 am Service • Bible Study Wed. 6 pm

Southside Church of Christ

PO Box 698 • 8th & Houston
Robert Lee (325) 453-2176
Recardo Reyes, Preacher

Sun. 10 am, Sunday School

11 am & 6 pm, Worship

Wed. 6 pm, Worship

Northside Church of Christ

PO Box 508
9th & Chadbourne • Robert Lee
(325) 453-2685, (325) 763-2118
or (325) 473-1053

Services: Sun. 10 am

Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church

601 W. 10th, Robert Lee

(325) 365-2687

Rev. Timothy Hayter, Pastor

Saturday Vigil Mass 6 pm

Robert Lee Baptist Church

PO Box 493 • 22 W. 11th
(325) 453-2724

Chris Walls, Pastor

Sun. 9:45 am, Sunday School

11 am & 7 pm, Worship

Wed. 7 pm, Prayer Meeting

Victory Assembly of God

(325) 453-2208, PO Box 638

202 E. 6th Street, Robert Lee

Rev. Rocky Youngblood, Pastor

Sun. 9:45 am, Sunday School

10:45 am & 6 pm, Worship

Wed. 6 pm, Bible Study