

2018 Best Friend of The Packer

WAYNE & VASIE TEX

veryone knows that Mule Days exemplifies family fun and togetherness, but for Wayne and Vasie Tex, the 2018 Best Friend of the Packer, it is multigenerational family involvement. Three generations of the Tex family have participated and more, if the Mann family is included.

Vasie was born and raised in the Owens Valley, and for many years her father Tiny Mann raised, trained and sold horses and mules. He could be described as the first generation, simply because his mules supplied the pack stations. His daughter Vasie competed in the very first Mule Days, riding Black Jack, a mule belonging to Leo Porterfield. She has been participating, one way or another, ever since.

Wayne Tex began competing in Mule Days during its second year, in team roping, steer stopping, matched pairs and other events. He has also judged the Mule Days Parade and packing events and worked security. Wayne is originally from the west side, where he worked for Johnny Jones beginning when he was twelve years old. He didn't realize how lucky he was to be able to spend summers packing in the Sierra.

mules their entire lives. Vasie recalls, "I wanted to grow up to be a packer just like Lee Summers." Over the years she worked for various outfits in the Eastern Sierra, as did Wayne, who additionally had a 400-mile trail maintenance project for the Forest Service – fixing the trail from Mosquito Flat south to Kennedy Meadows.

the Sierra from Oakhurst to the east side, and the second Friend of the Packer."



was in 1958 when he worked a Chamber of Commerce trip covering the route of the proposed trans-Sierra highway, from Minarets Pack Outfit on the west to Red's Meadow on the east.

They both agree that the best part of the packing and mule industry was the continual opportunity to meet Both Wayne and Vasie Tex have been around horses and a huge variety of people from all walks of life and the chance to hang out and get to know the real "old hands" of western yesterdays.

Wayne and Vasie have raised their family, all their children have participated in Mule Days and now it is the grandchildren's turn. It is a fact that without the life-long commitment of families such as the Tex's, both Two trips were especially memorable for Wayne. The first packing and Mule Days would be far different today. In was in 1953 when pack station stock was driven across all ways, they deserve the honor of being named "Best