



Roper  
1992-1997

By Alan Shaw

No matter what anyone else may tell you (I'm talking to you, Maggie Johnston!) Roper was the best dog that ever lived. In 1992 a distant relative of mine called my dad to see if he was interested in an Australian Shepherd puppy that they wanted to give away. Dad let me know about the dog and I went to see him that afternoon. We connected instantly when I walked into the pen and the puppy was mine.

Unlike most horse show dogs, Roper had to work for a living most of his life. He was an excellent cow dog and there was a time when I was doing a lot of cow work for different ranches in the area. Roper must have been part cat because I know I killed him at least seven or eight times. Apparent deaths notwithstanding, Roper was always ready to go the next day.

Roper and I have traveled thousands of miles together. Of course, he always had to ride in the back of the truck and not the front like other spoiled dogs (Hi again, Maggie). Roper wasn't just a pet. He was my best friend. No matter how bad things got, I knew he would be there looking at me with those eyes saying "Hey, I love you no matter what."

Even though Roper's health had gotten pretty bad by the end of 2006, he was always waiting for me when I got home from work at the end of the day and he was always ready to go to the barn. On February 2, though, I arrived home to find him lying in the front

yard. This time, he didn't get up to meet me. I walked over and petted him and told him that we would go to the barn in a few minutes. When I came out fifteen minutes later, Roper was gone at the ripe old age of 15. I truly believe that he waited for me to get home so that he could say "Good bye."

I will have other dogs like Roper, but I'll never have another friend like Roper. I know he's running and playing in heaven and waiting on me to get home one more time.