The beloved late rancher, Elaine Gay (1918-2015), was known for many things: conservationist, rancher, historian, community leader, local activist, club member, mother, wife and more. She was known widely as the kindest of women, who personified grace and goodness and left her magnificent mark forever on this valley.

If you ever had the privilege of meeting Elaine, you surely will never forget her. Her charm, wit, smile and infectious laugh touched all who crossed her path. For this and her vivid memories of the early days in Pleasant Valley, a scenic jewel just south of Steamboat Springs, she often drew packed houses as a featured speaker at the Tread of Pioneers Museum and other venues.

Of all the ways we remember Elaine Gay, she was known far and wide as a phenomenal cook, who was encouraged repeatedly throughout her life to record her recipes and capture her generation in the cookbook she published in 1990 called *Cowpokes, Cowpies and Otherwise: Recipes of the West*. After many years out of print, the cookbook, along with Gay's book *How Pleasant is the Valley*, was reprinted by the Tread of Pioneers Museum this year with donations gifted to the museum in Gay's memory after she passed away in 2015. Both books are for sale in the Tread of Pioneers Museum's store, and proceeds support preservation and educational activities at the museum.

"Both of Gay's books capture irreplaceable and personal snapshots of a formative time in our local history and a generation of pioneers that we are quickly losing," said Candice Bannister, museum executive director. "We hope to keep this history and the memory of Elaine Gay alive through "A Taste of History" events that feature her cooking and the reprinting of her books."

"Nobody was better fed than us," said Bill Gay, Elaine's son, who deeded the books' copyrights to the museum. "I think mother embraced cooking as she embraced life... No matter the challenge, she embraced it. That spirit was reflected in her cooking."
On May 3, the Tread of Pioneers Museum proudly hosted the Ute Indian Pow Wow Dance Performance and Presentation. The Youth Leadership Coalition of the Ute Indian Tribe of Fort Duchesne, Utah, performed pow wow dances and music and shared the history and meaning of their dances and regalia in four presentations—two for the public on May 3 at the Steamboat Springs High School Auditorium and two for Strawberry Park Elementary students on May 4. The events were free, courtesy of the museum and the Ute tribe, but all voluntary donations supported a Ute language preservation project.

“We were thrilled to host this event for the second year,” said Candice Bannister, Executive Director of the Tread of Pioneers Museum and the organizer of the event. “The response from the Steamboat Springs and Ute communities was very positive last year, so we were eager to expand the event with a larger venue and more performances this year.”

The museum strives to tell the story of local heritage through the voices and perspectives of the people who lived it. Through exhibits, events, and programs, the Tread of Pioneers Museum creates unique opportunities for local residents and visitors to learn first-hand from the Ute people themselves.

The Ute dancers, all women this year, performed Traditional, Jingle, and Fancy dances. The four male drummers mesmerized the audience with their heartbeat rhythm, while the athletic dancers kept up with the beat.

“It is an honor to serve as a conduit for Ute Indian cultural appreciation in our community,” said Bannister. “We hope to increase awareness and appreciation of Ute Indian history and culture while also providing an opportunity for Ute Indian youth to connect with their ancestral lands and the town of Steamboat Springs. We hope this will become an annual event.”

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**TAX CREDITS AVAILABLE:**

The Tread of Pioneers Museum is now a Colorado Enterprise Zone Contribution Project. This means that a member/donor who makes a contribution to the museum of $250 or more may claim a Colorado income tax credit of up to 25% of the amount of his or her donation. This dollar-for-dollar credit against Colorado state income taxes can be claimed by the donor in addition to any federal or state income tax deductions. When you donate $250 or more, museum staff will send you an easy form to use at tax time to claim your tax credit and deductions. Easy as that! For more information, contact Candice at 879.2214 or cbannister@treadofpioneers.org, or talk with your tax advisor.
Volunteer Spotlights

Laurie Kuelthau

I love Steamboat Springs! My husband and I were fortunate to move here from Boulder about two years ago after several years of working on our new property north of town. I’ve really enjoyed volunteering at the Tread of Pioneers Museum. As an avid history buff (my husband and kids can attest to pulling over to any roadside history marker), volunteering and learning about Routt County’s history is a delight, particularly meeting visitors from all over the world. Fun fact: I can’t pass up a buy one, get one free sale on chicks at the feed store, even though I already have 16 hens! When not tending hens or horses, favorite pasttimes include birding, riding and cross country skiing.

Cindy Svendsen

I’m originally from a very small town in NE Iowa but have lived in Steamboat going on 42 years. I love the beauty and the history of the Yampa Valley, and the Museum offers the opportunity to read and discover such interesting facts about our NW corner of Colorado. In my retirement, I especially enjoy the flexibility of volunteering both at the museum and my church and have even started piano lessons through the college. Even though our winters are long, I especially enjoy the four seasons of Steamboat!

*If you would like to join the museum’s volunteer team or become a board member, contact Tamra at 879-2214 or tmonahan@treadofpioneers.org

Intern Experience
By Emily Eldridge

I tend not to talk about my accomplishments very much, even when I’m proud of myself. Other people usually brag for me, to my total embarrassment. But I feel I’ve done some pretty cool things at the museum these past few months, so I want to share.

In February, I wrote an article about the 1918 flu epidemic and its impact on Colorado, particularly on Steamboat Springs and other nearby towns, for the local newspaper. This was my first public piece of writing.

The big one: in case you missed it, the Winter Olympics took place earlier this year, and I have the privilege of living and working in “Ski Town U.S.A.” 15 Olympians lived or trained here in 2018, and I created my very first solo museum exhibit about Steamboat’s 2018 athletes. I researched the games and athletes, and designed and mounted (with help!) the information panels and a couple of artifacts belonging to previous Olympians.

At the end of February, my boss arranged an amazing loan for the museum – a 2010 Olympic silver medal won by Steamboat Springs native Johnny Spillane. And the coolest part: in the absence of the museum Curator, Candice turned the medal over to me to create a display! It was small and simple, but I don’t think I’ve ever handled something as cool (or as valuable!) before.

With the return of the Curator this spring, I was able to work on some collections-focused projects, including cleaning and labeling objects. When the museum closed for maintenance at the end of April, I helped change out some items and exhibits, and even created two small displays of my own. Sorting through boxes of vintage medicine bottles and flipping through the drug ads in an 1890s Sears catalog made for a very fun afternoon!

In the first weeks of May I’ve been kept busy. I helped put the finishing touches on the museum’s new art exhibit, assisted with the amazing Ute Indian Pow Wow Dance Performance and Presentation, and dressed up as a cowboy for one of many school programs.

These are things I worked hard on, had fun with, and am proud to have done. I’m so grateful for the opportunity to have done these things and for the support and help I had in doing them.

*Emily Eldridge volunteers at the museum as part of the Colorado Episcopal Service Corps. She will be serving the museum full-time for two years.
Looking Back

Marion Gibson received the 2017 Leckenby Pioneer Award for her years of service and contributions in Routt County – October 2017

Executive Director, Candice Bannister, and her daughters give out candy in pioneer costumes during the 4th of July parade – July 2017

A Ute Indian Fancy Dancer during the Pow Wow Performance – May 2018

“A Taste of History” speakers pose in their vintage aprons – March 2018

Trip Advisor Five-Star Reviews

“Outstanding museum with hundreds of artifacts from the pioneer era to present…”
  - Drae66, Draper, UT

“A great experience for young and old.”
  - Thomas CL, Tulum, MX

“The museum received the 2015 -2018 Award of Excellence from Trip Advisor.

“A local gem!”
  - easytravels3, Centennial, CO