

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF JEAN BUTZ JAMES by ELISABETH F. RUFFNER 10.12.17

JEAN ("MITZIE") BUTZ moved to Prescott as a young woman, and purchased an extensive ranch property -Deep Well Ranch - from a long-time ranching family - Robert Perkins - whose brothers also ranched extensively in the Chino Valley area.

Bob and Laura Perkins had lost their only son - Robert, Jr. very early in WWII, and the family soon sold their property to the Mitzie, a victim of polio as a young girl, following a pattern of investment in those years by wealthy families in agricultural property in the west.

In the early 1940s when Prescott's Mercy Hospital had burned, a volunteer group filed incorporation documents as Prescott Community Hospital Association, and achieved tax-exempt status, moving into an abandoned school building in 1943, establishing a non-profit hospital, still operating as Yavapai Regional Medical Center soon to observe the 75th year of providing services to central Yavapai County.

As a member of the hospital board, I recruited Mitzie to the board. At a time I do not recall, she had married her ranch foreman Harold James, and continued a successful ranching operation on land on the west side of Highway 89 North, from Granite Dells almost to the town of Chino Valley, as well as some land on the east side of the highway now included in the municipal airport.

Prescott Community Hospital Association, newly incorporated to provide a non-profit hospital for the community, acquired an abandoned school building at 400 South Marina Street, and opened a hospital there in 1943.

When we successfully acquired the newly constructed two wings of Yavapai County Hospital on Willow Creek Road and established the Central Yavapai Hospital District under federal authority, Mitzie James loaned the hospital board \$50,000. to defray the costs of the move - a considerable undertaking. In subsequent years, as the five, ten thousand notes became due, Mrs. James forgave the debt.

Also due to the exceptional volunteer spirit in the district - the central one-third of Yavapai County we conducted annual elections for the district board for at least five years, with the collaboration of the county elections office. The only cost would have been the printing of ballots, and free space for the election board was also contributed as I recall, by a church.

Over the years, Betty Perkins Warman and I, along with material provided by the Trust for Public Land and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, called on Mitzie, at her request, for a social visit, as well as to discuss her desire to place easements on her private land - every other section being leased from state land, which was also, by state law development, funding the purchase of state owned open space through the volunteer activism in seeing the state legislature led by Governor Jane Hull creating Growing Smarter and Growing Smarter Plus. Mrs. James intended to create protection for the ranch land, but for a variety reasons which included her failing health due to a reoccurrence of the poliomyelitis symptoms which had partially paralyzed her as a young person, we were not successful.

The James Estate is now in trust with Ron and his wife Laura, others as administrators. They have been very generous with the YMCA, Heart Center at YRMC, and many other extensions of

support of Mitzie's interests which include \$1.25 million directly to me as Chairman of the restoration committee of the Elks Opera House Foundation. The trust now has also contributed a large parcel of land in the northern reaches of the Deep Well Ranch land to the Yavapai Regional Medical Center for a hospital in the northwest area, south of the Town of Chino Valley.

Jean Butz James and her husband Harold James were very generous also with Prescott College in the founding years. The Perkins Ranch which they owned as The Deep Well Ranch along the West side of State Route 89 was a significant land holding which has now passed into their estate which is managed by Harold James successor nephew, Ron James and his wife Laura.

30

Substantial Grant Donated By Scaifes

A donation of \$150,000 has been given to Prescott College by the Scaife family of Pittsburgh, according to Dr. Ronald C. Nairn, college president.

The \$150,000 Scaife donation may not be used to match the recently announced \$75,000 gift from a Texas foundation, Dr.

Nairn stated, explaining that the matching money for the Texas gift must be raised in Arizona. Nor will it be used to match the \$25,000 gift from Mr. and Mrs. Harold James, who specified that matching funds be raised in Prescott in connection with the progress drive.

Building interiors of Prescott College are receiving final touches now with carpeting expected to be finished next Friday.

Three boxcars of furniture have been delivered through Woodlo Office Supply, with three more on the way. Furniture shipments include both dormitory and classroom.

Landscaping currently underway is designed very simply to blend the natural flora and terrain in with its surroundings.

Registration is set for September 26 and 27, with classes scheduled to begin on Wednesday, September 28.

Those classes will include six Prescott students to date.