

# **OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND FORESTRY**

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**PRESS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 27, 2016

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## **Secretary of Agriculture Statement on passing of Agriculture producer Jim Draper**

OKLAHOMA CITY – Secretary of Agriculture Jim Reese today issued a statement on the death of Guymon agriculture producer Jim Draper, 82, who died early Sunday:

“Oklahoma agriculture, conservation, and the Panhandle have lost a great advocate and leader in Jimmie Draper. Jimmie was a kind and generous man who would host just about any group any time on his family farm near Guymon. We extend our sympathies to his family, while sharing with them that he will be greatly missed by the rest of us as well.”

### **A STORY FROM APRIL 2, 2006 in THE OKLAHOMAN ON JIM DRAPER**

Guymon farmer's old curiosity collection puts fun before sense

By Bryan Painter, The Oklahoman

GUYMON – Jim Draper's collection may be one of the extremely few things in Oklahoma more random than the weather.

Where else could you find two pommel horses, buckets of lye soap and cans?

What's more random than a collection that includes a 1974 Volkswagen, a two-person jail cell and an album featuring highlights of the July 1960 Republican National Convention in Chicago?

Why in the world would someone put a string of multi-colored rabbit's feet, a train depot baggage car converted to a dessert cart and a puzzle of the "Gone With the Wind movie poster under four connecting sections of metal buildings?

Why? Just for that reason. To spark your curiosity.

The 72-year-old Draper is a farmer of small grains such as wheat and milo.

But his farm headquarters is unlike most, or perhaps any at all.

"I just collect anything that someone might have fun looking at," Draper said. "I'll go to auctions and garage sales and if something's the right price, I'll buy it. I've been picking stuff up since probably the 1960s.

"I like to see people reminisce."

And then there's Draper's ornery side. That's the side that likes to stump you. That's the Draper who can be walking along and all of sudden stop and point with a 4 1/2-foot wooden cane and ask his favorite question "Know what that is?"

Looks like a step. Swing and a miss.

"It's for milking," he says proudly.

Downstairs, a few steps away from a collection of eight-track tapes, he points to a row of albums including Kenny Rogers' "Ten Years of Gold and K-Tel's "Disco Rocket."

Here goes the cane.

"Can you guess about how many albums are on that third shelf alone," he asks.

About 500?

"That's a popular guess," he answers, letting me down gently. "There's about 1,000. I think in all, I have enough that you could listen to a different album 24 hours a day for two years."

Draper was born and raised near Marshall, about 45 miles northwest of Oklahoma City. The 6-foot-5 Oklahoman played basketball at what is now Panhandle State University. After graduating 50 years ago this year, he left to serve in the Army.

But he returned to the Panhandle to farm. And eventually collect the obvious and the curious.

As he walks across the catwalk in a loft, Draper zeroes in on a corner, stops and swings the cane upward.

"Know why that bucket's shaped like that?" Draper asked as he pointed to a closed-funnel shaped bucket.

The water bucket came from the W.M. Jeffus Grain Co. in the Texas Panhandle town of Plainview. Insurance companies required the grain elevators to keep a 55-gallon drum of water in case of fire, Draper said.

Obviously, you'd need a bucket to get water out of the drum in case of an emergency. But if you kept a regular bucket nearby, someone might use it for something else and not return it.

"But since this was funnel-shaped you couldn't set it down, so it really wasn't good for anything else but this," Draper said.

Items such as the 11 panels displaying giveaway pens, the Denver Post newspaper rack 10 cents daily and 25 cents on Sundays and the red stick pony are simply there to stir the memory of visitors.

And who are those visitors? Visitors include organizations, friends with family in town and in August, a wedding.

There are items that will mean more to them than the others. But what does Draper personally cherish the most?

"I'll show you in my office," he said. "This kerosene lamp belonged to my great grandmother Stagner. It's probably not worth much, but it means a lot to me."

Worth isn't important to Draper. He's not out to sell anything. If he sold something, he might miss the opportunity to stump someone.

And there's the cane.

"You ever seen these before?" he said, pointing at two glass cases containing one license plate each.

Sure, I've seen old license plates.

"No, these were made during World War II," he says as he reaches with the cane to two license plates made of fiberboard a 1944 Virginia and a 1945 Illinois license plate.

And that's why Draper's collection is what it is no theme, no pattern, no predictability.

Much like Oklahoma weather.

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**Photo caption:** Jim Draper, a long-time agriculture producer in the Oklahoma Panhandle who died Sunday, is shown here in a 2006 photo holding a funnel-shaped bucket, one of the thousands of items in his collection of various items.