



Above: Perrine Bridge in Twin Falls with inset of ISU Holt Area - both structures Thomas Buddy Hugues Jr. worked on as an ironworker.

Hugues work ethic, faith & putting himself in good places made a difference

By LORI EDMO-SUPPAH
Sho-Ban News

FORT HALL — Thomas Buddy Hugues Jr., 79, believes having a good work ethic and following the advice of his late grandmother Bessie Edmo Judson has made a difference in his life.

She told him to always put himself in good places and good things will happen, if he put himself in bad places then bad things could happen. She, along with his wife Margene of 60 years also taught him about spirituality because prayer is important.

"Mama Bessie" helped raise him after his parents Thomas Hugues Sr. and Cynthia Navo divorced when he was a small boy. He was born September 13, 1936 in the old hospital at Fort Hall. He has an older sister Beverly (now deceased) and a younger brother Orlin "Cappy" Hugues. Beverly and Cappy went on to live with their mother as she remarried and moved to Connecticut. He stayed behind with his father and grandmother.

It was a special time living with his



Buddy in U.S. Navy

grandmother. Because of it he got to spend time with many of his uncles who were cowboys and they taught him to ride. Buddy was sent to Stewart Indian School in Carson City, Nevada from first through fifth grade. He then attended Chemawa Indian School in Salem, Oregon from sixth to eighth grades. It was hard, he said, being away from home so young but kids from Fort Hall looked out for each other. There was a pecking order among the kids and everyone stayed within their group. He met a lot of older guys because he played sports and as he grew older, would see them at rodeos or while on business.

He then attended Blackfoot High School where he participated in athletics such as boxing when it was still a high school sport and basketball. After graduating, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy at 17

years of age after his father signed for him. He was sent to boot camp in San Diego and met all kinds of people. He utilized his boxing skills to avoid kitchen and cleaning duties as his company commander and base commanders were jocks. A smoker (boxing matches) was conducted every Friday so Buddy said he jumped at the chance to box rather than do dishes. He also played baseball. "All I did was clean the gym – I was a pet because winning made my commander look good," he continued.

He served four years in the Navy and went to the Far East at the end of the Korean War. He also served 12 years in the reserves on call. Buddy trained to be a machinist mate – E-4 that is comparable to a sergeant.

After getting out of the service he came home and went to work at the J.R. Simplot Gay Mine. There his father was general foreman. Many of his family was employed at the mine including Ronald Scrub, Bill, Pinno, Raymond Wash, Wesley Dude and Casey Edmo to name

Hugues: 'When an elder says something spiritually, then you listen'

a few. He worked bringing the railroad cars down, on the crusher and was an "oiler" —assuring the joints were greased on equipment. After the company implemented a nepotism clause Buddy said he was let go so had to find other work.

A family friend told him the ironworkers had three positions open so he went to the employment office to take aptitude tests; he was one of 23 interviewing for the jobs and was hired. He was 21 years old when he went through the apprenticeship program. "Mama was happy (his wife)," he said and that's how he got his start being an ironworker.

He married his wife Margene in 1955 and in October, they will be married 61 years. She's endured, he joked similar to a quote from Chief Dan George, "Endeavor to persevere." Together they have six children — four sons Tommy, Teddy, Michael and Ross, along with two daughters Becky and Karri. They also have 16 grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

He worked as an ironworker — welding and tying steel up high. It was his forte (strong point) and he eventually became a foreman. At the age of 24, he helped erect the steel for the Idaho State University Minidome now known as Holt Arena. He ran the crew on that job. He learned from the older workers as they were good hands, "I knew what had to be done."

Buddy also was a foreman on the Perrine Bridge that spans the Snake River Canyon in Twin Falls where he helped set all the beams. He said height didn't bother him as it was 468 feet to the bottom and they had safety nets beneath them.



Ironworkers stand on the Perrine Bridge in 1976.

It was when the Occupational Safety Health Administration law came into existence so an inspector visited their worksite. The inspector asked how they knew it was safe so Buddy showed him — he jumped, landed on his back and the inspector said "Oh my God," and Buddy told him, he put it up so he knew it was safe.

Other notable jobs he worked was at Prudhoe Bay on the Arctic Slope for two years. His family couldn't go with him because the workers stayed in huts but he would work for 21 days, then his employer would fly him home to Idaho Falls and return.

In the winter, he would continue



Buddy with his grandson Trey when he rode a sheep.

working and go to California. If an ironworker belonged to a union, he could get a business agent so he did and worked on many high-rise buildings in Los Angeles and also a bridge in San Diego.


One of his last jobs away from home was working on a refinery in Denver and after that he decided to return home and work at local jobs. He retired after 45 years but will still get his pin for working 55 years. The past five years he's served as apprentice coordinator and helped many Indian boys get into ironworking including Swede Edmo, Jimmy Broncho, Whipple Edmo and many others. "I told them these Indian boys are good hands," Buddy continued. His dad always told him no matter what Indian boy you put on a piece of equipment, all you have to do is show him and he will run it better than anyone — true fact.

Buddy passed on his ironworking skills to his sons Teddy and Michael. Teddy worked for 35 years as an ironworker and is an officer with the local #732 union. Michael finished the apprenticeship and is a journeyman but he chose a different profession and now works in physical therapy.

To supplement his income, Hugues decided to start rodeoing after his cousin Rusty Edmo told him he made \$20 in a rodeo. It was a lot of money in 1958. He went to the McCammon rodeo with Rusty — entered in the bareback and saddle bronc riding after borrowing a rigging and saddle. He came home with \$20. He continued going to local rodeos and his uncle Pinno Edmo encouraged him to go to Idaho Cowboys Association rodeos. He won the ICA bareback riding championship in 1960 and his first saddle. He

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Buddy Hugues, Ted Hugues & Jack Edmo.

went pro in 1961 riding in the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association. He got bucked off in Lehi, Utah and suffered a concussion so he quit riding for a year. However, he said he needed the extra funds so he started riding again in PRCA and going to Indian rodeos with his cousin Jack Edmo. He won the bareback riding at first Indian National Finals Rodeo at the Cow Palace in San Francisco, Calif. where the top five riders were invited from each association. He also won the Red Bluff, Calif. pro rodeo twice.

Finding success in rodeo could be attributed to advice Mama Bessie gave when she sat down by him and said, "Remember now don't let your head get too big so your hat don't fit it and you better learn to be humble." "When she said something spiritually, then you listen," Buddy continued. "I believe in what the old people have to say, I've had experiences and a believer." "I have respect for my elders and the Native way of life - living in both worlds - it works for us."

He quit rodeoing after the Cow Palace and concentrated on his family, work and going to college at Idaho State University in Pocatello.

Although he didn't get his diploma he had enough credits to finish his de-

gree in coaching and a minor in special education. "I realized although I know sports, my temperament wasn't so good."

He was inducted into the Idaho Rodeo Hall of Fame in 2006 and currently serves on the Board of Directors.

Today he still raises quarter horses at his spread on Hawthorne Road and sells them for roping. His son Tommy does the same thing and Buddy says they're in "cahoots" together. If they see a horse that bucks good they'll try bucking it at a local rodeo. They bucked a horse at McCammon rodeo and the Festival a few years back then took it to Las Vegas bucking horse sale and sold it for \$12,000.

Both Tommy and Teddy also saw success in rodeo - Tommy as a saddle bronc rider and Teddy in bareback riding. Both were also in the PRCA and competed in Indian rodeos.

In his spare time he also golfs and fishes. He enjoys fly fishing and takes his jet boat up north to the Clearwater River to fish.

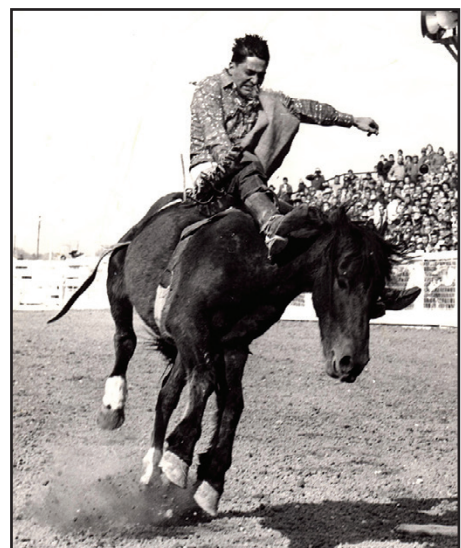
He said his inspiration is all of his uncles - growing up around them helped him look on the good side of people. "I get blessings from the Creator - it's what it's all about - everyday I prayed." When he would get done working on a job he'd thank the Creator for watching over him and he always figured he had help - someone was watching out for him.

As he reminisced he would look out his picture windows over the meadow recalling seeing moose at times, deer, coyotes and even a couple of wolves. A herd of antelope also used to roam near his home.

He spoke with pride about the accomplishments of his kids and grandkids

and says he loves them all equally. He thinks about Mama Bessie all the time as she talks to him in his dreams. His one regret is he didn't learn the Bannock and Shoshone language - he can understand but doesn't speak fluently. If he forgets how to say a word he calls up his cousin Swede or Max (Maxine Edmo.)

His advice to his children and others is you can only get what you really work for. "Don't put yourself in debt, work hard, go after your goals - you can do it," Buddy said. "If you ask Creator and his son to help you and put yourself in good places, you're going to get blessings." He also said it's good to help others, make good decisions and stay away from the booze. "Be honest with people because I think that's what the Creator wants us to do."



Bud Hugues riding in Tuscon, Arizona in 1960.

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