

A GLANCE INTO HISTORY

Faces Behind the Places

Many local places are named for individuals who made significant contributions to the quality of life in our valley. This is the fourth in a series about some of them.

Henry F. Lake, Jr.

Lake School at 800 North Boulevard was built in 1963 to serve elementary students and was named in honor of the late Henry Freeman Lake, Jr. It is now the administration headquarters for Gunnison Watershed REIJ School District.



Three generations of the Lake family made significant contributions to the area. The senior Henry F. Lake was among the area's early pioneers in the 1880s. Junior's son, Rial R. Lake, would continue the family legacy into the 1990s.

Henry, Jr., was born March 19, 1873, in Howell, Mich., to Henry and Mary Toch Lake. He was an only child whose mother died when he was two years old.

The Lake men moved to Gunnison during the 1880s boom. After high school, Henry, Jr., returned to Michigan for college, graduating in 1895 from Michigan Agricultural College — later Michigan State. He found employment as a teacher at various Gunnison area schools.

In December 1900, Henry, Sr., took possession of the assets of the Gunnison News in payment of a debt, moved the newspaper into a building he owned in the first block of N. Main St., and put Henry, Jr., in charge until he could find someone to run it for him. Henry, Jr., would remain there until he passed away almost a half century later.

In January 1901, the Lakes eliminated competition by purchasing the People's Champion and combining the two newspapers into the Gunnison News-Champion, a name that would last for 75 years. Two more newspapers were acquired and merged into the business: the Gunnison Tribune in 1904 and the Gunnison Republican in 1932.

The position of influence that Henry, Jr., had in the community helped shape its future. In 1901, he was named to the first Board of Trustees of the future State Normal School, and was involved in selecting the site for the institution that ultimately became Western Colorado University. Over the years, he would also take leading roles in the lobbying effort to route Highway 50 through Gunnison, in the fight against water diversion, and in urging citizens to vote for bonds to finance an airport.

In 1902, Henry, Jr., married Ruth Allen, daughter of a prominent stockman and merchant. They had three children, including Rial, who attended Western and taught for a few years before joining his father at the newspaper in 1935.

Henry, Jr., was active in many groups, including the Colorado Editorial Association, Rotary, the Gunnison County Chamber of Commerce, Odd Fellows and the Gunnison Pioneer and Historical Society. He and his family were members of the Community Church.

At home, he was devoted to floriculture, specializing in hybrid lilacs and rare peonies. Playing classical music on the piano was a daily pleasure.

Henry F. Lake, Jr., passed away on Feb. 2, 1948, after a short illness. During the course of his life, he saw the rugged frontier give way to a place that resembled the Gunnison of today.

— Larry Jensen



Western junior Jimmy Pallotto is pictured in the KWSB studio, where he works as the sports director.

Western a family tradition for Pallottos

Offensive lineman following in father's footsteps

Caitlin Gleason
Special to the Times

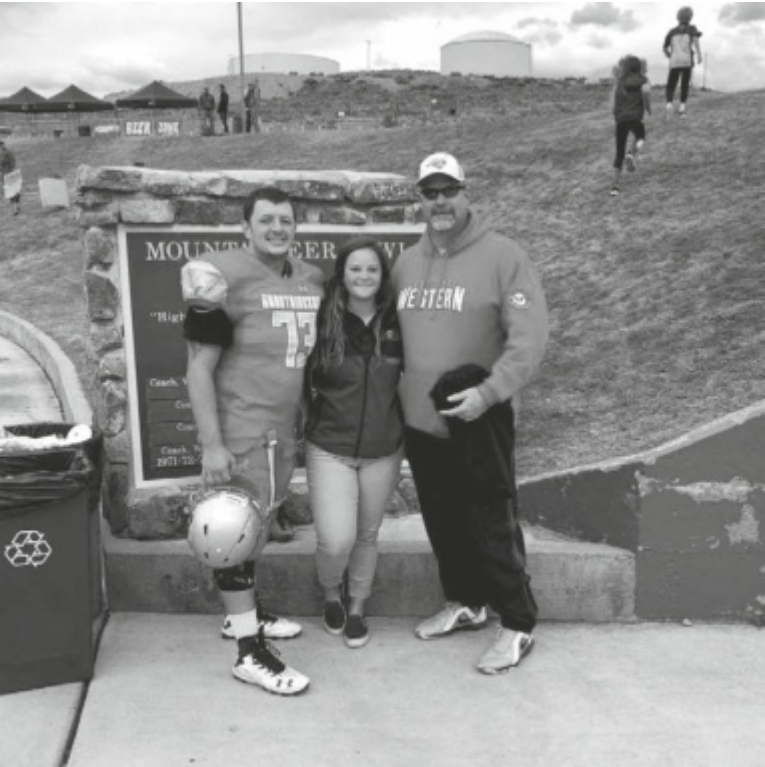
(Editor's note: This article is part of a series of Western Colorado University student profiles that will appear on occasion.)

Sitting in the stands of the Western Colorado University's Mountaineer Bowl, James Pallotto II watches his son following in his footsteps — playing football for the Mountaineers. Pallotto II, who graduated in 1995, played football and threw shot put for Western.

Now his son, James (Jimmy) Pallotto III continues the legacy as an offensive lineman for the same team.

"I have been associated with Western since I can remember," said Jimmy, who is a junior this year. "Because my dad went here, I had visited Gunnison and Western many times before I made the decision (to come to school here). When I was offered a football scholarship, I had already fallen in love with the school."

Jimmy's sister, Roxie, also decided to attend Western. This year is her first, and while she does not play football like her father and brother, she is the equipment manager for the team.



(L-r) Jimmy Pallotto, sister Roxie and dad James Pallotto II are seen after a Western football game.

Coming from Cherry Creek High School — located in the Denver metro area, with more than 3,800 students — Jimmy noted the differences in coming to college in a small town.

"The Gunnison community is really tight-knit," he said. "People who do not even attend the school know who I am and what I do."

That is also due, in part, to the fact that along with football, Jimmy is a sports commentator for Western's radio station, KWSB. He helps broadcast sporting events for community members to enjoy.

"I met with the program director, and he asked me if I wanted to do a sports show with him,"

Jimmy recalled. "I was hired as KWSB's sports director this year."

Jimmy is a double major in communication arts and sociology, and he hopes to be involved with sports media — either broadcasting or writing — when he graduates.

"Western has impacted my life and given me the opportunity to do what I have always dreamed of — be on a radio show as a broadcaster," he said. "Western has shaped me into the individual I have always wanted to be. It is a place where you can take steps to become a better person, and you are given every opportunity to create your own path."

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