

## CONTENTS

- 5 Grandmother of Conservation  
Mardy Murie
- 8 All in a Wyoming Weekend  
Bear River Greenway
- 10 Cooking Corner  
Beautiful Breads
- 12 Our Own  
Wyoming Girl Guard
- 15 Book Nook
- 16 Luck o' the Irish  
Anné Ellis Donovan
- 19 Best Blogs
- 20 Sue Wallis
- 22 Women at Work

## Letters...

I really enjoy the magazine. Deanne Price is a neighbor where our family ranch is located. I enjoyed the Wyoming song she wrote in the January 2012 issue.  
~Pam Kirkpatrick, Pinedale

I just received my new issue of The Wyoming Woman Magazine... another outstanding publication!! Big hugs!  
~Mickey Babcock, Jackson

The Wyoming Woman Magazine was recommended to me by Representative Rosie Berger (R-Big Horn). Two subscriptions, please. Thank you!  
~Carla Ash, Sheridan

I really have enjoyed the magazine. It brought me a bit of home while visiting family.  
~Deborah English, Maryland

Thank you for featuring my article on Nellie Tayloe Ross in the January 2012 issue. The article looks great!  
~Lori Van Pelt, Saratoga

Thank you for the article on San Benito Monastery, "The Healer's Art," in your January 2012 issue. I enjoyed reading the whole magazine. How wonderful to have articles on women in Wyoming. May your work be blessed and fruitful.  
~Gratefully, Sr. Hope, San Benito Monastery, Dayton

My winter issue of The Wyoming Woman Magazine just arrived and really makes my day. Thanks for including the photo of my Sherpa buddies and I on the back cover! There are lots of mountaineering friends in Seattle and Nepal who are going to get a real kick out of this. Best Wishes!  
~Robert Birkby, Seattle

# GRANDMOTHER OF CONSERVATION

*Margaret (Mardy) Elizabeth Thomas Murie*

by  
Phoebe Coburn



*Mardy and Olaus Murie in their Alaskan furs prior to their honeymoon – a 550 mile dogsled across the Alaskan tundra.  
photo © The Murie Center archives*

Engraved in an aging pine board above Margaret "Mardy" Murie's fireplace is the quote, "The wonder of the world, the beauty and the power, the shape of things, their colours, lights, and shapes; these I saw. Look ye also while life lasts." The quote comes from the children's book *Wild Lone* by B.B., a tale of a one-eared fox called Rufus.

For a stranger, it would be unexpected that this esteemed conservationist and wildlife biologist would have a simple

children's quote on her mantel. But Mardy was known as the "Grandmother of Conservation," and would speak to the President in the same way she would talk with a group of children. She could explain complex and controversial issues while maintaining a kind and endearing demeanor.

Mardy Murie, her husband Olaus and brother-in-law Adolph were on the forefront of establishing the modern conservation movement – which they based out of their front porch in the shadow of the Tetons. Today, the Murie Ranch in Moose, Wyoming, is known as Conservation's Home.

Mardy was born in 1902 in Seattle but soon moved to the Alaskan Frontier. It was there that she fell deeply in love with wildlife and wild lands. Her tireless determination was shown at a young age when she became the first female graduate of the University of Alaska in Fairbanks. Shortly before her graduation, she met a young wildlife biologist, Olaus Murie, who quickly fell in love with Mardy and proposed to her. During the following five months, Olaus had to leave Mardy behind while studying the Arctic Caribou. During this time, Mardy only received one letter from her fiancé, which told her the date and the place of their wedding.

As the day neared, Mardy prepared for the 17-hour boat ride down river to meet Olaus and after their marriage, the two set off for their honeymoon – a 550-mile dogsled trip across the Arctic. Two in the Far North is the tale of that adventure, of Mardy and Olaus' romance, and of their fight to preserve the wild places their love story took place in.

Mardy and Olaus's unwavering dedication to the environment led to the signing of the Wilderness Act in 1964, the creation of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in 1960, and in 1980, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act was signed by President Carter. Over the next few years, Mardy received numerous national and international awards. She was made an honorary park ranger by the National Park Service and received the Izaak Walton Award and John Muir Award. At the age of 96, Mardy received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest honor any civilian can receive, from President Clinton.

In 1945, Olaus and Mardy bought their 77-acre Ranch in Moose, Wyoming, with Mardy's younger half-sister, Louise, and Olaus' younger half-brother, Adolph. Louise and Adolph married a decade after Mardy and Olaus and Adolph, too, worked as a biologist primarily in Alaska, focusing on predators. Until Olaus' death in 1963, Mardy worked mainly as Olaus' assistant as they traveled between Alaska and Wyoming. Despite the fact Mardy was in her mid-sixties when Olaus passed away, she began her own career in conservation and became the most famous of the Muries.

Years after Olaus' death during a commencement speech to the Jackson Hole High School's graduating class, Mardy said, "A point I am trying to stress and leave with you: the power of the individual... Don't underestimate your power for good, as a person... we never know how far the ripple travels."

Mardy passed away on the Murie Ranch in 2003 at the age of 101. Five years prior to her death, a non-profit foundation, The Murie Center, was established to carry on the Murie legacy through inspiring people to act on behalf of nature. The Murie Center focuses on mentoring, leadership, and open conversations about wilderness, the environment, and humans' connection to it.

In 2006 The Murie ranch, where The Murie Center is based, was designated a national historic landmark.

As shown by the quote engraved in Mardy's home, she strived to get children inspired by wilderness and become involved in conservation. During her speech when she received the Audubon Medal she said, "We are all whirling with the earth together. And reaching out to the young generation coming along is one of the most important tasks of organizations." Mardy's values must be passed on to Wyoming children. While our lives last, we must open our eyes and see the beauty and wonder that Mardy saw in the environment. It is our obligation, as well as our opportunity, to care for and love Wyoming as Mardy did, and teach the next generation to do so as well.

The Murie Center, in partnership with Grand Teton National Park, engages people to understand and commit to the enduring value of conserving wildlife and wild places. We intend to effect change in the conservation world by:

- Engaging new conservationists
- Advocating for large landscape conservation
- Inspiring conservation leadership in education
- Connecting people with wild places and encouraging exploration
- Advancing scientific research

We are grateful for all of the help of our supporters in making this work possible.

## Timeline of Mardy's Life

Mardy Murie with children Martin and Gail Murie at their home in Wyoming. photo © The Murie Center archives



**1902** – Margaret (Mardy) Elizabeth Thomas is born on August 18th in Seattle, WA to Ashton Wayman Thomas and Minnie Eva Fraser

**1907** – Ashton and Minnie divorced

**1910** – Minnie remarried Louis R. Gillette and followed him with the family to Fairbanks, AK.

**1919** – Mardy completed high school and continued on to Reed College, in Portland, OR.

**1921** – Mardy transferred schools to Simmons College, in Boston, MA

**1921** – Mardy met Olaus Murie, a handsome young biologist, through a mutual friend in Fairbanks and

agreed to stay in touch while she was away in Boston and he was in the Brooks Range on dogsled

**1924** – Mardy becomes the first woman graduate of the University of Alaska with a degree in Business.

**1924** – Mardy and Olaus marry in Anvik, AK on August 19 and spend their 3 month honeymoon doing research by dogsled in the Alaskan wild.

**1925** – Mardy gave birth to their first son, Martin, on July 10.

**1927** – Mardy gave birth to Joanne on May 21

**1927** – Olaus took a job in Jackson, WY studying the North American elk.

**1931** – Mardy gave birth to their second son, Donald, on December 16.

**1932** – Mardy's younger half sister Louise married Olaus's younger half brother, Adolph, in 1932.

**1945** – Olaus, Mardy, Adolph and Louise decided to purchase the 77 acre STS Ranch in Moose, WY from the Estes family

**1956** – Mardy, Olaus and three young biologists (Bob Krear, George Schaller, and Brina Kessel) flew to the remote Sheenjek River Valley, AK to survey the land proposed for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR)

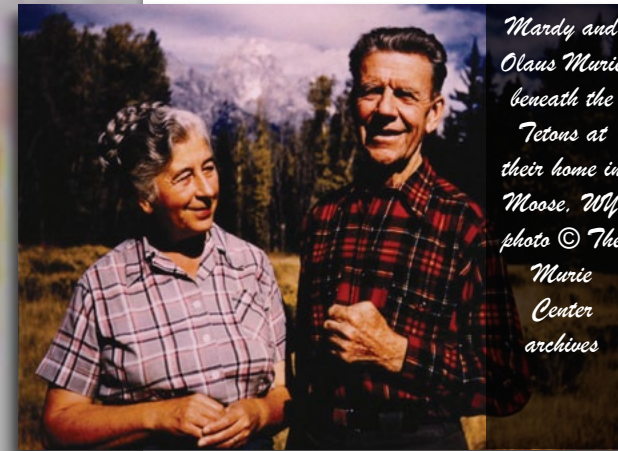
**1962** – Mardy publishes a book about her life in Alaska, *Two in the Far North*

**1963** – Olaus dies on October 21 from cancer

**1964** – President Johnson signs the Wilderness Act and invites Mardy to the White House for the signing. The Act created nine million new acres of protected lands in the lower forty-eight states.

**1966** – *Wapiti Wilderness*, a book Mardy and Olaus began writing about their early years in Jackson Hole, WY, is published

**LATE 1960'S** – Mardy began participating in a local summer program



Mardy and Olaus Murie beneath the Tetons at their home in Moose, WY. photo © The Murie Center archives

called Teton Science School, which continues to grow into a prestigious year-round environments education center.

**1968** – The Murie Ranch was sold to the National Park Service in 1968 but the Muries kept a life-time lease.

**1970** – After travelling to Seattle, Australia, New Zealand, Alaska and across the United States, Mardy returns to Moose, WY and decides to make it her permanent home once more.

**1979** – Mardy receives that Audubon Medal for her conservation achievements

The Murie Ranch, home of The Murie Center, nestled in Grand Teton National Park beneath the shadow of the Tetons. photo © The Murie Center archives



## About The Murie Center

Established in 1998, The Murie Center exemplifies and carries forward the legacy of the Murie families by inspiring people to act mindfully on behalf of wild nature. The Murie Ranch was home to the conservation-minded Murie families beginning in 1945. Brothers Olaus and Adolph Murie had distinguished careers as wildlife biologists, and married sisters from Alaska. Olaus to Mardy and Adolph to Louise. After the two families acquired this ranch in 1945 it was not only their home for decades, but a center of the American conservation movement. Today it is home to The Murie Center, a non-profit organization that strives to carry on the legacy of the Muries. The land is owned by Grand Teton National Park and now is recognized as a National Historic Landmark.

**1980** – The ANILCA bill, or the Alaska Lands Act as it was known, was passed. The Arctic National Wildlife

~Phoebe Thunder Coburn grew up in Jackson Hole, Wyoming and Katmandu, Nepal. She helped begin a chain of children's libraries in remote areas of Nepal called the Magic Yeti Libraries. She currently attends the University of Denver and is majoring in International Studies with minors in Environmental Science and Public Policy. She loves skiing in Colorado, but misses the Wyoming mountains.