

A photograph of a cowboy on a horse herding a group of cattle in a field. The cowboy is wearing a light-colored shirt, blue jeans, and a wide-brimmed hat. The horse is dark brown. The cattle are dark-colored and are gathered in a line. The background shows a vast, open landscape with mountains in the distance under a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. The text is overlaid on the image.

DAY OF THE AMERICAN COWBOY

REYES CARBALLO

National Day of the American Cowboy Nomination

IRON COUNTY

REYES CARBALLO

Grit is one of the characteristics that exemplifies rancher and cattleman, Reyes Carballo, of Parowan, Utah. And, his grit didn't come easy. As a young boy Reyes grew up chasing the pigs that enjoyed foraging around their farm, but he was often barefoot. He learned to rope early because his rope was his only play toy. During the school year he would ride to town with his mother and siblings in a wagon pulled by a mule. They lived in a small outbuilding Monday through Friday, sleeping on sheepskins as a mattress, but made the 30 mile trek back to the ranch for the weekends to help with cattle and farm chores. There was no store. There was no plumbing. There was no money. It was survival in heart of Chihuahua, Mexico.

If his story sounds like something out of an old western movie, that's because where he grew up was, in fact, very western and something most people wouldn't believe is real.

But, bare feet and traveling in a wagon would prove to be only the tip of the iceberg. Before his 13th birthday, Reyes lost his mother and within the same year, his father never came home from the Cow Camp on a nearby mountain range.

Roping pigs and going to school came to a screeching halt. Alone, with a brother slightly older than himself, the two young boys tried to keep the farm and ranch going until their father returned. Days turned into weeks, and weeks into months. The younger siblings had been taken to live with grandparents and the two older boys were working from sun

up to sun down to care for the animals and crops that had been abandoned, feeling much the same themselves.

As winter came, an uncle arrived and took Reyes from the farm. He was small, athletic, and skinny- he would make the perfect jockey for a rich, double-dealing horse trainer who wanted to win big. It was the Golden Age of Horse Racing, the 1970's and when Secretariat would make his winning runs. Reyes was grateful for what seemed like an opportunity. His world soon became filled with fast horses, screaming crowds, airplanes taking him to the next race track, and also some very sad and helpless times. His uncle was trying to keep Reyes' body weight low which would give the race horses a competitive edge, but Reyes was starving. The abuse increased with the winnings, there was days he was given only water and a small amount of bread; barely enough to give him the strength to ride. He knew he had to escape. Before a big race in Tijuana, his uncle was occupied with the thousands of California race horse fans who poured over the border to gamble on their favorite horses, Reyes made a run for it. And he kept running.

His legs, and grit, eventually brought him to the Mexican-American border. The land of opportunity lay in front of him.

He doesn't talk often of this day. He feels the weight of politics and judgement on his shoulders. But, he made it. He came to America. And, he could nearly be the poster child for "The American Dream."

He found his older brother, who also had made it to California. Reyes got back on his feet as a young teenager, working various labor intensive jobs before deciding to head to Denver and carve out a life near the Rocky Mountains. But, Reyes didn't make it that far. During a snowstorm, he got stuck in a small town in Southern Utah called Parowan. With only \$40 in his back pocket and the clothes on his back, he ended up starting a life here, in the place we now proudly call home.

Reyes started as a farm laborer for a Sheepman, and then worked for others who played a pivotal role in his success; including Senator Dennis Stowell, and eventually Hal Mitchell. Reyes became a son to Hal, and would one day take over his farm and ranch because of his dedication and love for the Mitchell Family and the true opportunity they gave him. Reyes now owns his own herd of cattle, manages the land and animals in honor of the

late Hal Mitchell, and owns a meat shop alongside his wife. They raise premium quality beef cattle and are locally and Nationally Ranked.

Reyes has focused his life on helping others, and especially youth. He gives tens of thousands of dollars and all the opportunities he can muster to children who are without. He's a proud American Citizen and continues to stay up-to-date with current politics and policies. He knows the blessing that comes with being in the United States of America, and will take every opportunity he gets to share his knowledge and hard-earned experience with others.

He, is an American Cowboy.