

DEADWOOD WALL OF FAME 2005

Fred G. Borsch III

Born: September 12, 1900

Died: November 2, 1981

Born at the turn of the century to some of the first pioneers in the Black Hills, Freddie Borsch held a number of occupations over the years, ranging from prospector and engineer to pilot and bartender. But it wasn't until his late 40s that Freddie found his most successful profession: coyote trainer.

Freddie grew up in Galena and attended high school in Deadwood, where he played baritone in the 1915 Deadwood High School band and basketball on the school team in 1918. By the 1920s he was working with his brother Chester in the Salt Creek oil fields in Wyoming, but the pair left for California in 1926 with dreams of making the first flight across the Atlantic. When the pair realized they didn't have the necessary funding, they joined the team led by Charles Lindberg. Freddie even helped push the Spirit of Saint Louis out of its hanger in San Diego just before Lindberg's landmark flight. By the time Freddie returned to Galena, the tiny town was on the brink of abandonment. He bought up most of the settlement in an effort to preserve it.

In 1947 Freddie adopted Tootsie, an abandoned coyote that he taught to sing tunes as she howled. Word quickly spread about the pair, who became regional celebrities. When the coyote was designated the official animal of South Dakota in 1949,

Tootsie began to serve as the state's mascot.

Tootsie recorded an album, South Dakota

Tootsie, and went on a ten-state tour with Freddie.

Freddie and Tootsie remained active in the local community, regularly making appearances at Deadwood High School football games and homecoming events.

On August 6, 1949 Governor George T. Mickelson declared Tootsie South Dakota's Official

Animal at the Days of '76 - another of the coyote's favorite local events. She also served

as the official symbol of Freddie's Spot Liquor store, which stood on the corner of Main and Lee Streets in Deadwood.

The giant neon sign he commissioned in Tootsie's honor has been restored and can be seen today near the original location of the Spot.

Tootsie died in 1959 and was buried behind Freddie's cabin in Galena.

Freddie, who became an expert in Galena's history, lived in the cabin until he died in 1981. It is now occupied by his niece.



DEADWOOD
SOUTH
DAKOTA

A National Historic
Landmark