

# SKULL



AN OUTFITTER'S JOURNAL



THE  
GOVERNOR'S  
TAG

PAT'S  
**RIFLE**  
BUCK

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# THE GOVERNOR

The Governor was a special deer for reasons beyond gross inches. Pat Allen was a joy to be around, he had been all over the world hunting and had story after story about his adventures. Some funny, others intense, but all of them real. The one thing Pat was missing from all the animals he had harvested was a big mule deer.

I received a call from my uncle back in 2016, and he told me he had a friend that had just won the Colorado Mule Deer Governors Tag. He asked if I was interested in taking on the challenge of finding him a 200" deer, and I told him, "Absolutely!" Pat called me later that day to ask a few questions about the area and the logistics associated with a hunt where he had so much time. I explained to him that I already had hunters booked for the season, but I had a numerous small holes in my schedule that would allow me to get out and look for a good buck. I asked Pat if he was going to contact any other outfitters during September since our season didn't open until October 1st on The Plains. Pat replied, "You are the only guy I want to go with, if it happens it happens, no pressure." Pat was putting all of his chips in one

basket and depending on me to fulfill his dream of a big muley buck.

Opening day came around and we had several big deer lined up, but like I mentioned before, I had clients that would have first opportunity. We went on to harvested 4 bucks in October that went over 200", which was absolutely incredible. On one occasion I had a break and called Pat to come out and see if we could find a buck, but he was unable to make it before my next client came in. He was disappointed, but still in good spirits of me finding him a big buck. The next break I had was in the latter half of November. I had a guy cancel which opened up a week that I could go out and attempt to find a deer for Pat. I was seeing plenty of bucks, and great bucks, but they just needed to hit that next level. One afternoon I went to a spot I had been a few times earlier that summer while scouting and several times in October. The area didn't hold many deer, but every so often I'd come across a good, mature buck. I got up to my usual glassing spot, panned the scope around, and a big framed buck came into the picture. It only took a few seconds for me to know





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that this was a buck Pat would like. I sent over a few pictures to see what he thought. Pat replied, “He would be a great buck to have a chance to hunt.” I told him Casey and I would head out early in the morning to see if we could relocate the buck and to head our way. The next morning, I found the buck in almost the exact same spot as the night before. The buck went into a wash and out of sight, but at least we knew where he would be spending the day. Pat showed up a bit later and we got right to work. We walked in about a half mile to the last place we had seen the buck. Moving very slowly, we peaked over the ridge trying to spot the giant before he spotted us. It was Pat’s day, I crept up to one last ridge, looked over, and the buck was feeding 130 yards below us. I grabbed Pat’s shooting sticks and moved forward about 10 feet for a clear shot. The moment of truth was near, the buck had no idea we were there and he just needed to move a few steps for a clear shot. After about 5 minutes





the buck moved up the hill enough for Pat to see his vitals. I told Pat, “Take your time, make sure you are steady, he has no idea we are here.” Pat had been hunting for many years and been through this kind of situation before. He took a breath, made sure his .270 was steady, and squeezed the trigger. Pat made a great shot and dropped him in his tracks. After the shot Pat looked at me with a huge smile on his face and said, “I have wanted a chance at a big one like this for years!” Pat, Casey and I made our way over to the downed buck. As we were admiring him Pat didn’t have many words, but said, “That’s the biggest deer I’ve ever shot, and it’s worthy of the Governor’s Tag.” He shook my hand and told me thanks again and again. This buck ended up scoring 212 inches, with a majority of the score coming from his giant, wide frame.

As I stated before, this buck was special, not only because of size, but for the memory that came with the hunt. This would be the last big game animal Pat

would ever harvest. And, with all the hunting he had done, a big mule deer was about the last thing on his list. Pat passed away a month later on a pheasant hunt in South Dakota from a heart attack. I didn’t know him well, but he was a pleasure to be around. He told some great hunting stories from his travels all over the world. I wish I could have had the chance to hear more. I was glad to be a part of his life if only for a short time and one big buck. I got the bad news from my uncle in December after Pat had passed. I told him, “Well, I guess if it was his time to go, he was lucky to be doing what he loved.”

It meant a lot to me when Pat told me he wasn’t going to hunt with anyone else during our initial conversation. He told me he had faith I would find him a deer he would be happy with.

Pat held the most covenant tag in the state and I’m honored he chose to hunt with me.





- IN MEMORY OF -  
PAT ALLEN