

CH BE HAPPY

BY BOB FUNKHOUSER

Maybe one of the most appropriately named horses ever, CH Be Happy went to greener pastures at the end of May, leaving behind many great memories for those who owned and trained him. The two-time World's Grand Champion Fine Harness horse was 30.

Bred by Dr. Simon Fredricks, Be Happy was originally registered as Simbara's Radiant Majesty. He was out of one of the two greatest broodmares ever, Denmark's Radiant Society (BHF), who was also the dam of World's Grand Champion CH A Sweat Treat and World's Champions CH The Radiant Prince, CH Rejoice, CH Simbara's Samba Jamba, CH Simbara's Audacity, CH The Great Gaspar and other show stars. Be Happy was the only one of her foals sired by Mountain Highland Majesty, a son of Mountain Highland Memories who only had seven foals.

The expressive gelding was first purchased by Hoppy Bennett as a yearling and then Andrew Yost as a two-year-old, followed by Ivan Jones in the fall of his three-year-old year. He was first brought out by Milo Jones but then purchased by Larry Hodge and Joan Hamilton who are the ones who changed his name to Be Happy.

Mitchell Clark was his next trainer. He selected the young star for Elisabeth Goth. "We bought him from Kalarama," said Clark. "They were riding him but we went a different route. Larry [Hodge] was riding him but I didn't think there would be too many people who would fit him under saddle so we went back to harness.

"He was a blast! Every day was fun for him. You can't have more fun than working a horse like him with the lines bouncing off his rump. You never had to entertain him; that would have blown his mind. He found his own things to look at and you couldn't rob him of his confidence."

"I was so fortunate to have Be Happy," added Goth. "He was such a kind, wonderful horse. Every day he was so happy; his name suited him to a 'T.' I'll never forget the many moments we shared and I cherish the time I had with him. Truly an outstanding individual."

Clark won the Junior Fine Harness World's Championship with him and the following year Goth showed him to several titles on the west coast before going east to Louisville and placing reserve in the amateur harness qualifier and championship. In the summer of 1991 Linda Wilford purchased Happy and debuted him with a win at Santa Barbara. She was undefeated with him in '92, including a Ladies Fine Harness World's Championship.

Following that year he was placed in Tom Moore's hands. He won championships at Rock



Tom Moore drove Be Happy to two World's Grand Champion Fine Harness titles for Linda Wilford.



Mitch Clark won the Junior Fine Harness World's Championship with Be Happy for then owner Elisabeth Goth.

Creek, Lexington, and Mercer County before claiming the 1993 Fine Harness World's Grand Championship, his first. That year he beat the great CH Roselawn's Secret Rhythm, Storm Chaser, The Savoy and Don't Tell Mama to wear the roses. The next season would be a repeat with championships from Rock Creek, Lexington and Louisville.

"I kind of did it in reverse order," said Wilford. "We went from an amateur horse to open. I only had one horse when we came to Kentucky. What a thrill to own a horse like that. He was very special; the way he moved, the way he was put together, the way he loved life.

"He was a thrill to watch or drive. It was a great experience to go back and watch him with Tom [Moore]. It was an adrenaline rush to drive him. You knew it was going well. It wasn't really about the crowd or anything, you could just feel him giving everything he had every time you drove him."

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Doing all he could in the east, Be Happy was moved to the west coast with Dick Boettcher in the fall of his second world's grand championship. Over the next six seasons Be Happy and Boettcher ruled, winning at such shows as Monterey, C-Fair, Northwest Fall Classic, Charity Fair and Santa Barbara. Wilford's husband, Olen did show the gelding twice, winning both classes at Equine Collection and good friend Rochelle Johnson also got to feel the power and awesomeness of Be Happy with her two winning drives at Northwest Fall Classic.

"It was a privilege to be around him, to work him, to show him, just to pat him," said Boettcher. "I've always believed that horses that are very bright don't have good eye sight, but Happy saw everything. Tom Moore told me to keep him checked up high enough so he couldn't see the ground. However, the more he saw, the higher he went.

"That horse never aged; showing never got old for him. He was such a wonderful horse to work. He and Rejoice both were exciting every day of their lives. I remember showing him at Monterey for the first time and everyone lining the rail to see him. He was quite the celebrity."

Following his show career, Linda Wilford bumped into Elisabeth Goth at a show and asked her if she would like to have him back for his retirement years. Goth had always told her that she would be glad to give him a great home for his golden years and that's exactly what happened. He lived out his life as the appropriately named World's Grand Champion Be Happy!



Linda Wilford drove Be Happy to several west coast titles, in addition to a Ladies Fine Harness World's Championship.



Elisabeth Goth showed Be Happy as a four and five-year-old with several top titles. She also gave him a great retirement home.



Dick Boettcher was the last trainer to have Be Happy. They ruled the west coast for six seasons.