

# Solomon Gallegos

## UPHA Caretaker's Award

(Editor's Note: the following presentation was the second ever UPHA Caretaker's Hall of Fame, presented Thursday night at the UPHA/American Royal National Championship Horse Show. Announcer Peter Fenton read the presentation. Solomon was joined in center ring by Bret and Susi Day.)

Tonight's recipient of the UPHA Caretaker's Award is someone who has worked with some of the greatest American Saddlebreds in the industry including WGC Sky Watch, WGC Cameo's Angel Wings, WGC Wild Eyed And Wicked, WGC Be Happy, WGC Sir Silver Knight, WGC Memories Citation, WGC Wild Carrissima, WC Caravelle, WC Sass With Class, WC Dom Perignon, WC Grey Ridge Wildcat, WC Brookhill's Glam Slam, WC Our Sunbeam, WC Unattached, WC Valley Venture, WC Hocus Pocus Dominocus, WC Bahia Belle, WC A Travelin' Man, WC Fiasco, WC Belle Reve's So Photogenic, WC Bimini Pirate, and WC First Encore, just to name a few.

Solomon Gallegos began his career over 32 years ago with Mitch Clark and Elisabeth Goth. In those years, Goth gained a deep respect for Solomon remarking "He was great with all of his horses, but what I felt that he was particularly suited to horses that had "unique", (some might say "difficult"! ) personalities, and he was always there in any and every situation to be of help."

"There are so many things that I could say about him," explains Dena Lopez who he worked with for over eight years. He "was a groom that completely dedicated himself to the horses that he cared for. If ever there was a groom that understood the horses, that could read their minds, and sometimes I thought could think for them, it was Solomon. He was committed to each and every horse that ever was lucky enough to fall into his care. He was an honest man with a heart for the horse that we found rare to watch. It didn't take us long to realize that what we had in this man was a rare blessing, and to this day we are grateful for the time he spent with us.

We trusted Solomon with our best horses. One that comes to mind was Wild Eyed And Wicked. Wicked was a difficult horse, he didn't offer his trust to very many people. But we knew that Solomon had Wicked's trust and



respect. The bond that those two had, didn't form over night, but because of Solomon's commitment and dedication, not so much to us, but more so to the horse, those two became a team, and dare we say, there was an unspoken love between them.

I remember one year at Louisville, Solomon tied a rope around his foot, then the other end of the rope he tied to the door of Wicked's stall. If anyone would try to open the door in the night it would wake Solomon up. Just sleeping on a hard cot outside the stall door was not enough, and like so many times before, Solomon went the extra mile.

When Wild Eyed And Wicked was sick, Solomon never left his buddy's stall, and we knew that Wicked's friend was right

there with him. Instead of going home at night Solomon slept on a cot outside Wicked's stall to the very end. We saw tears in this man's eyes, and we watched his heart break. How do you say thank you for that?"

Michelle Macfarlane echoes the same admiration for Solomon especially while he cared for Memories Citation. Macfarlane remembers, "He took care of Memories Citation for me, who was too smart for his own good and could be difficult, especially if he got frazzled. Without Solomon's help I would never have mastered him and won the gaited stake with him. To keep him calm before the class, Solomon fed him oats out of a little bucket. He worked for me for many years and truly deserves this award."

For the past eight years his home has been at Grey Ridge Farm with Bret and Susi Day, who cannot say enough about Solomon and his way with a horse. From the youngest weanling to the solid performer he goes above and beyond. Susi said of Solomon, "He has an uncanny way with a horse and that they just couldn't do this without him. The honor that you are receiving tonight, you have earned many times over with your dedication to the American Saddlebred and your gift with a horse."