

CH Hank Heiron

A Beautiful Soul

by Leeann Mione



Hank's owner at the beginning of his show career, Mary Gaylord McClean, and the last owner he will ever have, Bonnie Kegley, shared a hug at Louisville after he earned the third world's championship win and second reserve world's champion of champions title of his career at the age of 22 years young.



Bob Griffin and Tom Thorpe knew he would be a perfect fit with Bonnie, Kelly, Thea and Amanda and when Amanda holds his lead shank, his love for her just pours out of him.

LOUISVILLE, Ky. - CH Hank Heiron, at the age of 22, epitomized the strength, grace, charisma, conformation, heart and courage that defines the American Saddlebred when he carried Amanda Tremper to the Walk and Trot Equitation 8 and Under World's Championship.

That win was again proof positive that this breed can do anything. Smart, charismatic, loyal, friendly, faithful and oh-so-athletic are characteristics that owners, trainers and exhibitors, whether riding or driving, use to describe their American Saddlebreds and time after time at the World's Championship Horse Show those traits were on display in awe-inspiring performances.

CH Hank Heiron's long and successful career can be attributed to several factors, not least of which is that he started life at Willowbank Farm. Bred by Joan Lurie, he was sired by Supreme Heir and out of the Attache daughter In A Moment. When he was two, he was purchased by Mary Gaylord McClean and went in training under the direction of John T. Jones. "We went shopping at Willowbank for an investment," said

Mary. "Hank had a good look about him, with tons of personality. We felt we could definitely make some money."

As a three-year-old, Hank made his show ring debut at Lexington Junior League and won the Five-Gaited Three-Year-Old class with Jones showing. They went on to Louisville where Hank won his first world's championship in the Five-Gaited Three-Year-Old Stake.

At All American Horse Classic, they were the ASHA Five-Gaited Three-Year-Old Sweepstakes Reserve Champions and went on to finish out his first show season at Kentucky Fall Classic with the reserve in the UPHA Five-Gaited Classic.

Mary sold Hank in March of 1998 to the Franklin Groves family for Camille Gangelhoff to show. He was only a four-year-old but there was no doubt he was going to be a great junior exhibitor horse.

His first class of the 1998 season was with Phyllis Brookshire at Midwest Charity where he won the Junior Five-Gaited class. Camille then debuted with him on the Red Mile in a big Five-Gaited Junior Exhibitor 15-17

class and they did well, earning a decent ribbon for their first time out together.

Louisville brought another world's title for Hank. He was top three in the Junior Five-Gaited Stallion/Gelding class with Brookshire riding in a huge 24 horse class and they came back in the junior stake to finish as the reserve world's champion of champions.

Hank carried Camille Gangelhoff to wins and reserves in the junior exhibitor ranks at shows including Milwaukee Spring, Midwest Charity, Tanbark Cavalcade Of Roses and Blue Ridge Classic. They were in the ribbons at Louisville in the 16-17 year old class in their final show together.

Dr. Wendy Troyer purchased Hank just after Louisville in 1999 for the amateur ranks and they had a great run together with wins and reserves in the amateur and ladies division at shows all over the southeast showing from Boones Farm and Stable.

Hank was all the while proving he was worth his weight in gold. A winner in multiple divisions with different riders, different trainers, different homes

and almost always in the midst of incredibly deep competition.

When Dr. Troyer sold him in 2004 to Davis Road Farms, he went back into the junior exhibitor ranks with Ali Deutsch, still under the direction of Paul Boone, and in their two seasons together they earned numerous victories and top ribbons including a world's championship in the 2005 Junior Exhibitor Five-Gaited 14-15 Sec. II class.

It was at Louisville that year that Hank's life would change forever and he would find his forever home. Northern Tradition Farm trainer Bob Griffin just knew in his heart that Hank needed to come to Illinois. He would both "Whoa" and "Go" and Bonnie Kegley needed to own him. "At Louisville, after he won his class, I went to Paul Boone and just said 'I really want him. If by chance he ever comes available, would you give me first option?' I really didn't expect them to sell him but I had to ask. I knew he would be perfect for Bonnie," said Bob.

Hank did become available for sale and in November 2005 Bonnie Kegley became his new owner and his final owner. She debuted at ASAW Summerfun in 2006 and won the Ladies Five-Gaited Championship. After a top three with Kelly Theis Williamson at Louisville in the Ladies Amateur Five-Gaited Gelding class, Bonnie showed to wins and reserves at Wisconsin Futurity and Mane Event.

They made the move to the five-gaited pleasure division the next season and that was where they really shined. Hank would walk for days and his beautiful, kind expression made him a perfect gaited pleasure horse. Bonnie rode to wins at Madison Classic, Oshkosh, Wisconsin Futurity and Great River Benefit until she turned him over to her grandson Bobby for the junior exhibitor five-gaited pleasure division. He had wins and reserves at Mid-America Signature, Wisconsin Futurity and Mane Event.

For the next two seasons Hank and Bonnie would have a great run in the adult five-gaited pleasure division and then she turned him over to Kelly Williamson again for her to show under the Northern Tradition Farm banner.

They would be a major force for the next three years and earned 17 wins and/or reserves in both the five-gaited pleasure and amateur five-gaited divisions.

Hank was 17 years old when he and Kelly Williamson showed at Wisconsin Futurity in 2011 and won the Five-Gaited Pleasure Adult Championship and qualifier.

At home at Northern Tradition in Minooka, Illinois between the 2011 and 2012 seasons, Tom Thorpe and Bob Griffin had an "Animal Intuitive" come to the farm and customers signed up if they wanted their horse to have a reading. Bonnie was anxious to find out whether Hank wanted to keep going or was it time to retire?

Hank said to the psychic "I've seen these horses with little kids on their backs. What's that all about? I think I want to do that. I think I would be good at it."

The next day, Bonnie told Bob Griffin to loan him to the Merlo family for Thea Merlo to show in walk and trot equitation. Hank and Thea amassed an amazing show record together; earning 20 wins and 7 reserves including two reserve world's championship walk and trot titles in their three years together.

When Thea aged out of walk and trot, Hank was ready for a new rider and there was another little girl at the barn who was ready for the challenge. The Tremper family has been customers of Northern Tradition for years. Dr. Kyla Tremper began riding in California as a 10-year-old with legendary trainer Barbara Beamer and now shows her horse Reedann's Top Notch in the amateur five-gaited division under Tom Thorpe's

direction. She passed on her love of horses, and in fact all animals, to her daughter Amanda. The family currently has two dogs, one pony, four cats, one miniature donkey, two ferrets, a pig named Scarlet and four guinea hens as pets and they run a non-profit animal sanctuary in Marseilles, Illinois.

Amanda had been showing her Saddlebred Rescue horse Razzle in the academy division and was ready for walk and trot in 2015 but the six-year-old was so tiny no one was sure she could ride Hank because she couldn't see over his head to see where she was going.

Hank however, was born to do this; Amanda could have closed her eyes and he would have carried her little legs to the winner's circle. She didn't have to close her eyes however because in their team debut at IASHA Spring Warm Up in March of last year they won the Walk and Trot 10 and Under class and then came back to win the championship. Wins at Mid-America Spring Fling, Oshkosh and Mid-America Signature preceded her first Louisville experience which gave her one of her proudest moments. "We got a ribbon at Louisville my first time there and I was really happy about that," said Amanda. In fact they got a ribbon in both the 10-entry qualifier and 10-entry walk and trot championship. They ended their first season together with two reserves at Saint Louis.



Amanda and her mom Dr. Kyla Tremper have been customers of Northern Tradition Farm for years and the Tremper family runs a non-profit animal sanctuary at home in Illinois.

They began their second season together again at IASHA Spring Warm Up and won both their walk and trot equitation classes. "He was slower last year but this year he knows I have more confidence so he goes faster now," said Amanda.

Yet again, Hank is an example of how kind and intelligent the American Saddlebred is. He does exactly what Amanda needs in order to make her shine just as he has done for every single person who has had the opportunity, or rather, privilege to sit on his back. They earned eight wins and three reserves before heading to their second World's Championship Horse Show together.

When Hank got on the trailer to head down the road to Louisville, it was his 16th time to make the trip. It was Amanda's second. He was a two time world's champion, two time reserve world's champion, a reserve world's champion of champions and he wasn't done yet.

They headed down the ramp and burst onto the green shavings Monday morning to face a very deep group of 10. Both were turned out to the nines and did their best job together. When the results were announced, Amanda was crowned the Saddle Seat Equitation 8 and Under Walk and Trot World's Champion. Her dream of winning at Louisville had come true. They came back in the championship and finished their week as the reserve world's champion of champions.

"I was thrilled to see him at Louisville," said Mary Gaylord McClean. "He has been blessed with wonderful owners."

That is definitely true and his final owner Bonnie Kegley could not love him more. "I call him Saint Hank," she said. "Every once in a while I go to the barn and do walk and trot on him. I love him and it makes my day, my week and my year to sit on his back."

Her generosity has allowed a lot of people the opportunity to be stars of the show ring. "He's just simply... more than perfect," said Tom Thorpe.

His kind, generous heart and his beautiful soul do indeed make him "Saint Hank".



Bonnie Kegley gave her beloved CH Hank Heiron a kiss to thank him for yet another job well done.