

UPHA HELEN K. CRABTREE EQUITATION INSTRUCTOR HALL OF FAME



Missy Hughes joined Lynda Williams Williamson, Gary Garone and Nancy Becker for her induction into the UPHA Helen K. Crabtree Equitation Instructor Hall Of Fame.

LYNDA FRESETH

This year's recipient of the Helen K. Crabtree Equitation Instructor Hall of Fame Award was introduced to horses at an early age. Born in the foothills of Virginia, she would ride in front of her Daddy while trail riding after church on Sundays through the Blue Ridge Mountains. Her love of horses was very apparent all through her early years as she was known for being willing to "ride anything that had four legs and hair".

As an example, she recalled her first experience in the show ring being made possible by a man who would bring several black ponies to shows in the back of a limo so kids could ride. She begged her Daddy to let her ride one of those ponies. So she and another child found themselves in the show ring and during the class the other child's pony decided to lie down. As a result, she ended up winning the class.

Her father often recalled that even though that class didn't cost him anything, it ended up being the most expensive blue ribbon ever. That marked the beginning of her love of the show ring.

Through her adolescent years, Lynda Williams showed her family owned horses and started riding for others while traveling to horse shows and learning to ride better by trial and error.

At the age of 14, Lynda began teaching Karen Waldron, who was a family friend and had borrowed Lynda's equitation horse for a show season. Her Dad was concerned about protecting her amateur status so the remuneration for that summer's lesson program was her first riding suit made by Meyers Riding Apparel. This experience established her love for teaching.

There was a change of focus when Lynda began a family with her marriage to George Williamson and when her son Jeffrey was born. Her unwavering love of horses and teaching remained, and soon she received inquiries for her to teach lessons. She first started teaching on Saturdays. Then teaching three days a week, then four days and ultimately a lesson program requiring six days a week of teaching. So it wasn't long before those lesson families wanted horses and Lynda Williamson began running a barn in Roanoke, Virginia.

Although she was teaching and training horses part-time in addition to being a full time mom, owning her own barn was still out of reach. So there were a number of years spent moving from local barn to local barn. But during this period she was able to develop long-term friendships and other relationships in the horse industry like the Tom Brock family, Lera Holland, Stephanie Allen Wellington, Shirley Speno and Michael Craghead, to name a few.

After running her own barn in Virginia for nine years, Lynda and her son Jeffrey moved to Indiana when she took a job as an assistant trainer at Delovely Farm. Her level of education in the horse business was about to go to another level. When asked what it was like to go to work at Delovely, "Shell shock" is what comes to mind when describing the emotion of coming from running her own barn in Virginia with eight or 10 horses going to the shows, to the complexity and intensity of competing with quantity and caliber of horses found at Delovely.

It was definitely an adjustment to see a stream of famous horse trainers filing through the door looking to buy horses and watching the lessons of equitation riders she had only read about in the magazines. With the move from Virginia, she brought two horses with her, Wind Capers and Stonewall's Santana.

This gave Lynda a great opportunity to apply what she was learning as well as hone her teaching skills by watching and listening during instruction from the very best, Lillian Shively.

Returning to her roots in Virginia for a year, Lynda was ready to apply her love for teaching and her newly developed skills when asked by Karen Waldron to teach her niece, Challen Cates. Susan Brock, a longtime student while Lynda was in Virginia, also returned as a customer. For a year, Lynda was Challen's equitation instructor, taught Challen to ride Stonewall's Santana, who had made the trip back from Delovely, as well as trained and coached Susan Brock.

At the time, the horse business in Virginia was challenging and Lynda had aspirations to run her own barn again with an opportunity to be in a competitive area. Pat and Bobbie Antonacci of Riverton, Illinois were looking for someone to run their barn and teach their four children.

After visiting the farm, it was decided that Wildwood Farm would be the next location for Lynda and her son. Things really began to shift into high gear while at Wildwood. As an example Hoppy Bennett called one day and said he had bought a walk-trot pony at Tattersall's and didn't know what to do with him.

It was suggested by others to send the pony to Lynda since she had taught numerous riders to show him through the years.

That pony turned out to be Stonewall's Santana. Lynda once again matched a rider with the pony when Susan Brock, her long-time student from Virginia, went on to win her first blue ribbon at Louisville in 1986.

Lynda began realizing the satisfaction of bringing new people into the world of showing and owning Saddlebreds through the growth of a lesson program and her emphasis on the details.

In the seven years at Wildwood, she began to be known for her ability to match horse with rider and it was evident by the successful combinations that went on to win world's and national titles.

While at Wildwood Farm in Illinois, numerous life changing events took place. Lynda lost her biggest supporter, her beloved Dad. Jeffrey went on to college after graduating high school. And she also met Andy Freseth.

Andy and Lynda had met on the Midwest show circuit and bought and sold numerous horses between the two of them. After a lengthy courtship, Andy and Lynda started planning a wedding, phasing out Wildwood and joining forces at Hollow Haven in Chanhassen, Minnesota.

Along with the numerous horses that made the trip from Illinois to Minnesota, Lynda continued teaching and bringing new people into the business. The focus was the combining of equitation and performance riders for the amateur and juvenile divisions.

After several years of success and challenges of working together in their Minnesota facility, an opportunity presented itself where their land was worth more by being developed than supporting a horse training stable.

Acting in the best interest of Hollow Haven, Andy and Lynda began the process of relocating their business. After first looking for a new facility in MN, they were contacted by fellow horse trainer, Bonnie Byrne, as she was interested in making a change in her life which would leave her facility in Wisconsin available.

Soon it was decided that Hollow Haven would have a new address. As Andy relocated to Wisconsin, kept the Bonnie Byrne horses there working and engineering the addition of 10 stalls onto the existing barn, Lynda worked the Minnesota horses, taught lessons and began closing up the Minnesota facility.

Hollow Haven found itself bulging at the seams with the merger of the Minnesota and Wisconsin customers.

The purchase of Callaway's Forecaster yet again left Lynda in uncharted territory. His owner Nancy-Leigh Fisher talked about the possibilities of vying for the World's Grand Championship Five-Gaited class.

This would call for a different approach by Lynda. It wasn't enough to simply teach and train for an amateur division. Now she would need to prepare the horse to have the athletic ability to endure the grueling pace while teaching with a different mindset to prepare Nancy to compete among the professionals.

Lynda was asked what it was like to have Nancy win the World's Grand Championship inferring how that may be different than if she had been doing the showing herself.

Lynda replied, "I was lucky to have a wonderful horse and a very talented amateur to achieve her dream. Expectations of competing as a professional may be different, but to prepare the horse and coach an amateur to compete with the pros was the ultimate challenge for me."

In recognition of putting together successful combinations for both performance and equitation divisions, Lynda had the privilege of being asked to be a World Cup coach. Lynda says, "Coaching the World Cup Five-Gaited team for two different years was a challenge because you are left to fit different riding types with unknown horses!"

Lynda has a passion for teaching and an appreciation for the discipline of saddleseat equitation. Her attention to and emphasis on the details has guided success in numerous divisions and at all age levels.

Outside of the showing, Lynda has participated in many ways to promote the equitation division. She has served on the UPHA Equitation Committee, judged the UPHA Finals and compiled videos for the UPHA to serve as an educational tool for riders and instructors. The videos included the steps necessary to get a rider from Academy to the National level of riding. And another video that explained the process of choosing and preparing a horse for the equitation division.

As an example of her love for the equitation division, Lynda and her son Jeffrey worked tenaciously for many years developing an equitation numerical judging system with three primary objectives in mind. Make it easy for the judge to use, enforce the equitation rules by division and provide feedback and transparency to the riders.

The need for a numerical system was realized many years ago and is still being perfected to this day.

In recent years due to some medical reasons Lynda has not shown in an under saddle division since 2009. During this time, she spent most of her time honing her driving skills as a trainer and teaching her students in driving divisions. Her motto over the years has always been; "You are best at what you do the most".

Determined to get back in the saddle, she could hear herself using her own words that she had used for so many years when teaching others to help herself keep her priorities in order to reclaim her old seat in the saddle.

Helen Crabtree was noted for her numerous equitation riders that excelled above the rest. But she also promoted the art of teaching and coaching performance riders. It has been Lynda's life work and lifetime goal to teach riding and perpetuate the sport of riding saddle seat for both equitation and performance divisions.



UPHA LARRY BACON LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



Mike Goebig was presented with the UPHA Larry Bacon Lifetime Achievement Award by Nancy Becker and Tammie Conatser.

MIKE GOEBIG

Mike Goebig represents the heart and soul of the Morgan horse. Mike's commitment to the Morgan community represents the kind of steadfast devotion that can be found among the best performers across virtually every vocation; a single-minded passion for what they do, a resolute reach for excellence in thought and deed, and a singularity of purpose that launches them out of bed every morning.

Mike admires a good work ethic in a horse and certainly this virtue applies to him as well. If you do what you love, you become the best worker in the world. And Mike's love of his work has been sustained his entire life. His work is a tribute to his parents, who were advocates for the Morgan horse by 1948. He opened his first public stable in 1970 and throughout this 47-year span he has produced many regional, national and world champions, including Equinox Damsel, Greentree Maryjane, HVK Frango, Born To Boogie, Queen's Vanity Flaire, Liberation Rhythm N Blues, Opies Boy, Love Her Madly, Paramount Perfection, Stand And Deliver, Miz Saturn Star, and The Master's Touch. Mike has made Morgan show horse history by winning the World Park Saddle Championship a record six times.

Mike's professionalism is not just as a trainer, he also is an exceptional leader in the Morgan industry. His ability to listen and achieve a consensus resulted in a deep appreciation from Association members and the AMHA Board of Directors when he served as Region 2 Director and as president for three years. He worked to find strategies to attract new Morgan enthusiasts to membership and explored methods to increase AMHA's relevancy in the greater equine industry.

Mike volunteers countless hours to share his training knowledge with others in clinics, hosted by individuals and clubs, across the country, Canada, and England. Mike and his partner, Dwayne Knowles, welcomed local 4-H and youth clubs for educational endeavors.

In 2007, Mike was inducted in the AMHA Hall of Fame and was AMHA Man of the Year in 2012. In 2001, he received the AMHA Golden Rein award. Highly respected among his professional colleagues, Mike's peers honored him in 2011 with the AMHA Professional Award. This past year, Mike was inducted into the Northampton Horsemens Hall of Fame.

Mike's devotion and commitment to the breed and its community represents the kind of passion from a person who loves what he does. AMHA is pleased to salute the talent, effort, and passionate stewardship that Mike gives to the Morgan breed each and every day with this nomination.