

Crowd Rejoices as Addison Drives into Hall of Fame

By Sadie Fowler



Sandra Hall
© unretouched
Photo by Sarah Bennett

Carol Addison delighted the crowd when she drove Crystal Creek's Cold Ice to victory in the Hackney Park Pleasure Driving Pony class. This was her first time in the ring since a devastating car accident left her with serious injuries.



Friends and family surrounded Addison after she was inducted into the show's Hall of Fame. The announcement, a surprise to Addison, came following the class victory Friday night.

As if the sight of Carol Addison driving a pony into the winner's circle wasn't enough to ignite chill bumps, her surprise induction into the J.D. Massey Hall of Fame Friday, April 14, drove the crowd's emotions into high gear.

Addison, who was involved in a devastating car accident last fall, drove Crystal Creek's Cold Ice to victory in the Hackney Park Pleasure Driving Pony class. The accident had left her with injuries that led some to believe she'd never be in the show ring again.

"It's kind of like peeling away the layers of an onion," she said. "It's one more thing you know you can do. You go through that gait and you know everything is going to be OK."

Carl and Kathryn Nichols own the pony she showed and it came as no surprise to them to see her triumph.

"I believe she's the most encouraging and inspirational person I've ever known," Carl said. "She did a magnificent job and could not have done better. She's a real horse lady and a real professional."

Addison said she was incredibly appreciative of the Nichols' support. She also expressed thanks to the entire crew of enthusiasts representing the show, especially the board that selected her for the induction.

"It meant a lot because I've been at that horse show for 40 years," she said. "So to be recognized by those people ... it's pretty special ... They could have chosen a lot of people but I'm sure glad they chose me."

Carl said, while she made a great show with the pony, the Hall of Fame induction stole the show Friday night.

"The crowd stood up and it just blew us all away," he said, adding her family joining her in center ring made the moment even more remarkable. "She did ask before she showed why her family was all there and I just said to her, 'well, they're here to watch you show.'"

As the audience applauded Addison's victory performance, the huge surprise to Addison came when Peter Fenton announced she was being inducted into the Hall of Fame.

Carl said he had only learned about the surprise induction after plans for her to show were made, but he happily helped do what he could to keep it a secret.

The remarkable story began a few months ago, when Kathryn and Carl Nichols visited Addison while she was recovering from the accident in rehab in Henderson, N.C., while in the area. As a gentle way to encourage her, as they were leaving, Carl told her when she was ready to show he'd have a pony ready for her. It was a light-hearted moment among friends.

Most people who show horses in the Carolina circuit know and love Addison. She's shown extensively for years and also serves as an equine massage therapist. Once, she even performed therapy on the mother of the pony she showed — although she only realized that following the show.

Following his first light-hearted attempt to encourage Addison to show, Carl checked in with her once again, about a month ago.

"I told her I needed to know by April 1, when entries were due," said Carl, a well-known pony enthusiast hailing from Winterville, Ga., who's equally known for being a good friend.

But it was still a "no" from Addison. Again, the accident that shattered her pelvis among other things made it a miracle that she'd recovered to the point she had. Dreams of showing seemed unrealistic to her.

Two weeks before the show, however, Carl said his phone rang and Addison shared great news. She wanted to show.

"I told him I was willing to give it a try," Addison said. "He had a spot on the trailer. I wasn't sure if I could bend my leg and get it in the cart. But if he was OK with not knowing for sure if I'd be able to do it or not, I was willing to give it a try."

"She just had to get it in her mind that she could do it, and she did," Carl said.

She practiced three days leading up to the show and then hit the arena like a seasoned professional. She admitted being a bit nervous leading up to the class, but once they hit the ring she felt completely at peace.

Her outlook on life takes on a similar sentiment.

"It's wasted energy to get down about this," she said. "I could be mad and upset that I can't do something, but that's wasted energy I could use on getting well. I could get down or I could say, 'Come on, let's go.'"

Although she misses training more than she can say, she's grateful to still be part of the horse world and said she'll always own a horse, at the very least.

"Hopefully I'll ride again one day," she said.

I could get down
or I could say,
'Come on, let's go.'