

# The One and Only JACK SCHATZBERG

by Bob Funkhouser

"Brutally honest. He was brutally honest," said Howie Schatzberg of his dad. "You didn't ever ask him a question unless you really wanted to know the truth as he saw it. A lot of trainers would ask him about their horses or a horse they were interested in because they knew he would be honest with them."

This past November, three days away from his 97th birthday, we lost the man who volumes could be written about. No matter who you are or what you do, meeting Jack Schatzberg was an experience you didn't forget. He said and did things for reaction and how you handled that reaction is where you ranked with him. He scared the life out of some and was the greatest for many!

"Oh my gosh, Jack and I have had so much fun over the years," said Owen Weaver. "We would cuss each other one minute and then have the best time ever the next. I don't know that I've ever met anyone like him, but I can tell you I'm really going to miss him."

As a 22-year-old pilot in World War II he had no career plans when he left the Army Air Corps. He started off teaching students to fly and while doing that he noticed how beautiful the manicured estates that he flew over on the North Shore of Long Island were and he bought a surplus camera and surplus Army film and decided he would photograph these estates.

"I had my students do figure eights over the estates and I took pictures and sent them

to the owners," said Schatzberg in a Horse World interview.

That wasn't his first, nor his last spur of the moment decision that worked out well.

"Dad told me that when he and mom and my four older siblings were still in New York – (Howie wasn't born yet) – he was walking down the sidewalk one winter and slipped on the ice," explained Howie. "He said right then, 'That's it Jackie, we're out of here.' That was on Thursday and on Sunday they loaded up four children in the station wagon and moved to California. He didn't have a job or anything lined up but he knew he was done with winters in New York.

"That's the way he lived his life. There wasn't anything he was afraid of and he was prepared to live with the circumstances."

Like most of his decisions, that moved proved to be extremely successful for his family. Jack and Jackie Schatzberg opened Jack and Jill Studios, focusing on baby pictures. It wasn't long before he became immersed in horse photography of all kinds, primarily in Arizona, Colorado and California. That started because his daughters Terry and Sue had started riding and he would take their pictures at shows. Soon, other people were asking him to take pictures and it evolved from there.

He became quite involved with the hunters and jumpers and then moved into show horses. Jackie worked the table and Jack took the pictures but they still needed

**1** Serving as a pilot in World War II was one of his many roles. Following the Army Air Corps, he combined flying skills and photography, taking aerial pictures of estates and selling them to the owners.

**2** Life was a toast for Jack Schatzberg who had so many amazing experiences because of the way he lived life.

**3** Two of the early greats, Jack (l) was with H. Leon Sargent in this historic snapshot of two cutting edge show ring photographers and two larger than life personalities.

**4** Horse photography turned into a family affair with Jack's son Howie and grandson, Casey McBride (l), learning the trade from him.

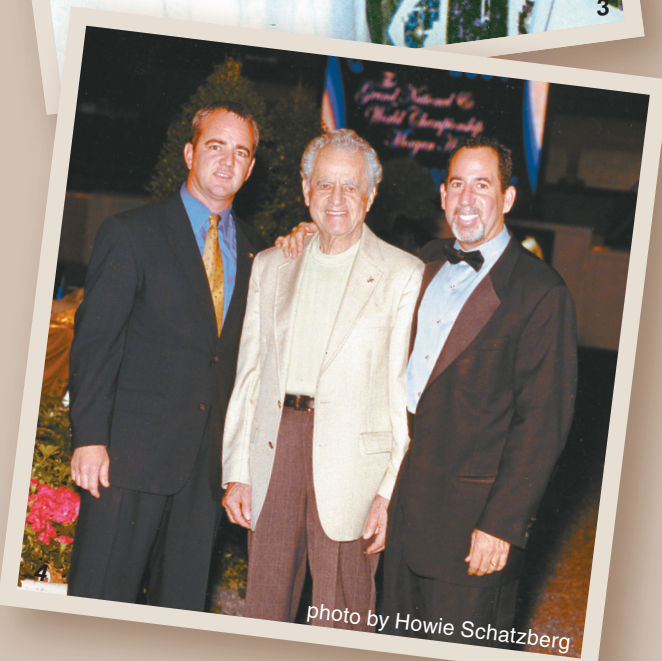


photo by Howie Schatzberg



more help so Jack recruited his youngest child, Howie.

"He didn't even tell me but he went to my school my junior year and took me out. He told them I was a talented photographer and had a chance to make a good career," explained Howie. "I was working for him and learning the ropes. He wasn't really a coach type, he just led by example. I didn't have a choice but to take good pictures. He would hold up the negatives after I shot and go, 'Crap, crap, crap, that's a good one, crap, that's okay.' Then he would say, 'you've got to get better, you can't take a bad picture.'"

Jack proved to be a progressive photographer. He was the first to set up a mobile lab at the horse shows and provide proofs and prints on site. He and fellow photographer H. Leon Sargent were among the first to retouch ears.

"He was cutting edge with everything he did," said Howie. "Jack was so far ahead of his time, especially in the digital retouching of ears. He wasn't afraid to take risks.

"As a father he was assertive, strict, and at times extremely overbearing, but looking back I know now that he was simply preparing me for life's great challenges.

"To my sisters he was a kind man with a gentle heart who taught them that they would get through anything with courage, grit and love. His love knew no bounds and somehow each one of his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren knew THEY were his favorite!"

Jack Schatzberg was a man of the world. His knowledge went so far beyond the dark room and the show ring. He thrived on travel, meeting people and enjoying great restaurants. He never stopped learning and never stopped teaching by example. He retired after some 35 years in the ring yet still remained a part of the equine community helping son Howie and grandson Casey McBride at their shows. When Jack was at their mobile labs, there was always a crowd around visiting with the legend.

"I'll never forget the very first time he put me in the ring," said McBride. "He put a camera in my hand at the old Santa Barbara Nationals and

told me to go to the upper ring, stand at a 45 degree angle and shoot when the horse was at the top of the jump. It was one of those old Hasselblad cameras that had 16 frames. He gave me the camera loaded and a couple extra rolls of film. I shot those 16 frames but then didn't know how to reroll the new film. I ran back to the trailer and he showed me one time and I was back at it. He expected you to know.

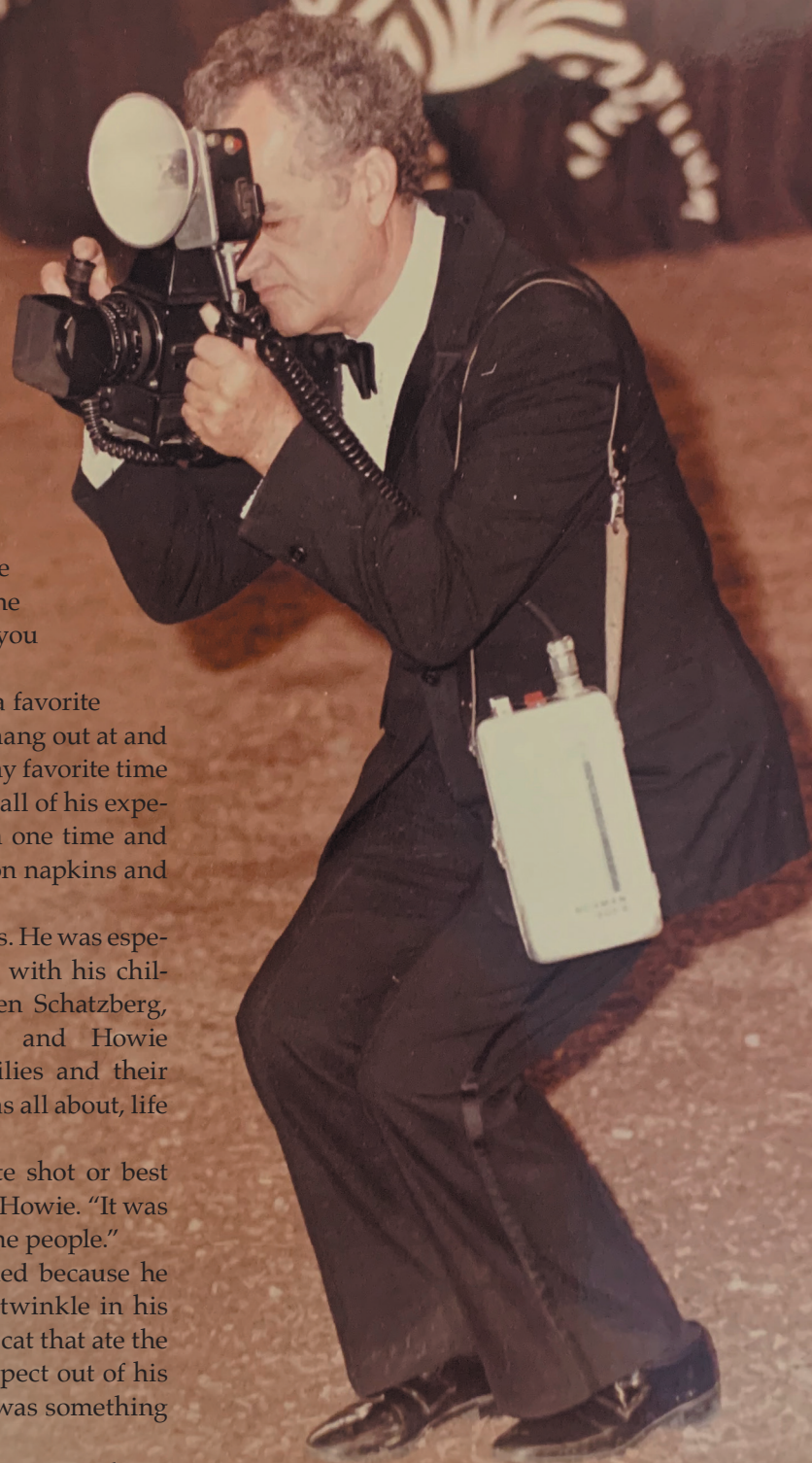
"It was tough love but we had a favorite hamburger joint we would go and hang out at and he would tell me stories. That was my favorite time with him, hearing the stories about all of his experiences. I remember going to lunch one time and he started drawing horse pictures on napkins and explaining angles to me."

He loved people and their stories. He was especially proud of his family, starting with his children: Joyce Rutherford, the late Ken Schatzberg, Terry Bankert, Sue Schatzberg, and Howie Schatzberg. He enjoyed their families and their life experiences. That's what Jack was all about, life experiences.

"He never was into his favorite shot or best horse show he photographed," said Howie. "It was always about the experiences and the people."

Many of our lives were enriched because he did take an interest in us. With a twinkle in his eye and a smile that looked like the cat that ate the canary, you never knew what to expect out of his mouth next, but you can be sure it was something you should listen to.

We're going to miss you Jack and we hope between dancing with the ladies and your Maker's Mark Manhattans, you still have a little time to remember all the great experiences here on earth.



*He was one of the pioneers of show ring photography being the first to have a mobile lab at the show to produce proofs and prints on site. This was from the 1980 A to Z Show.*



*Schatzberg shot many of the west coast greats, including Fine Harness World's Grand Champion CH Buck Rogers, pictured here with owner Michele Macfarlane.*

*A young CH Sky Watch and Mitch Clark were the subject of this great Schatzberg shot.*

