

AMERICAN HACKNEY HORSE SOCIETY HALL OF FAME

DUDLEY ABBOTT

Editor's Note: The following speech was read by announcer Peter Doubleday Wednesday, August 22, 2012, at the World's Championship Horse Show.



American Hackney Horse Society President Randy Harper presented the ribbon to AHHS Hall Of Fame inductee Dudley Abbott who was joined in center ring by his wife Sharon, family and friends.

A native Kentuckian and professional horseman since 1935, our honoree has been involved in many areas of the horse industry. He was a charter member of the UPHA and board member for five years in addition to being an officer. He was a founding member and president of the Kentucky Shetland Club.

He was a trainer of champion Shetland and Hackney ponies as well as American Saddlebreds. He judged every major horse show in the United States and Canada in addition to managing Tattersalls Sales for eight years.

In the early part of his career Dudley had some of the country's top Shetlands. One such star was a pony named Successful. One year at the Illinois State Fair this pony suffered a rare defeat. Leaving the ring with his red ribbon, he stood up in the viceroi with lines in one hand and his ribbon and whip in the other. "People were throwing programs and cups into the ring; I thought there was going to be a riot. The next morning I had a visit from the steward who said she was going to have to write me up for disrespecting the judges. I told her I wasn't disrespecting the judges; I was just so happy to be second to that fine

pony that I stood up and waved. She didn't write me up," he chuckled.

Frisco Pete was another Shetland trained by our honoree. He won 125 of 127 classes during his career and was so outstanding that a prospective buyer once offered \$100,000 for him – and that was during the Depression.

This year's recipient also had a host of top Hackneys. During his tenure as the trainer at Meadowbrook, the Walter Probst family's Ft. Wayne, Indiana, training facility, he had stars such as Silver Creek Fashion, So Rare, and Please Me. At the top of that list was the incredible pony known as Ambition. The long-tail was shown undefeated for four years and won 10 world's championships in a six-year span – the Ladies Harness Pony and Amateur Harness Pony titles in 1969, '70, '71, '72 and '74.

"It's funny how we bought that pony," exclaimed the UPHA Hall Of Fame trainer. "We were at Lexington and the boss's wife showed a pony one night and won. The next night she arrives at the show dressed to drive again. I told her we weren't showing back-to-back nights and she wasn't real happy with me. Dur-

ing the show I'm up at the ring watching a pony class and Mr. Probst asked me, "Who's going to win this one?" I pointed to Donna Moore and said, 'that one if he doesn't flip himself.' I had been watching this pony for about two years and he was a sight and then would flip over.

"He asked me if I thought I could fix him and I said I thought so, so he told me to buy him. When they lined up I stepped over the rail, went over to Donna and asked her what she wanted for him. She said '\$30,000' and I said, 'we'll take him.'"

Our honoree showed him the next night and won the class Another story surround the great Ambition was at the Rock Creek Horse Show when a local newspaper reporter asked our honoree, "How do you breed a champion like this," referring to Ambition. "You don't," replied the trainer, "he's just a freak." The next day in the paper the story referred to the Rock Creek Freak.

Horseman, ambassador, storyteller, and all around friend to many, we are pleased to honor this gentleman tonight for his contribution to the show horse industry and specifically the Hackney breed.