

WORLD'S CHAMPIONSHIP HORSE SHOW HALL OF FAME

DON JUDD

Editor's note: The following speech appeared in the official horse show program. Bill Carrington added numerous personal anecdotes and memories when he read the speech Saturday, Aug. 29, 2015 at the World's Championship Horse Show.



Don Judd was joined by family, friends and Judd Stables customers for his induction into the World's Championship Horse Show Hall of Fame.

Behind the dark shades and the quiet demeanor lies a horseman, passionate about the horse world. Don Judd was born and raised in Cookeville, Tenn. He was the only child of J.D and Velma Judd who ran a trucking line in Cookeville – where he got his lifelong love of trucks. A family decision to find a hobby led them to one night shows in Tennessee and to the horse that would become Don's initiation into the Saddlebred and show horse world. A big black stallion shown by J.T. Leech caught the Judds' attention and after much bartering, he was purchased for \$450.00.

Don spent his afternoons after school riding and learning with the help of a local groom named Byrd who would watch and tell him which gaits he was doing at the time. Lifelong friend Bill Carrington who also grew up in Cookeville recalled Judd always leaving school and basketball as quickly as he could so he could get home to his horses.

He started training horses for others as a teenager and racked his first two-year-old at 14 or 15. "This colt had a tremendous slow gait – similar to what you'd think about Emperor, but a long time before!" says Judd. "When I sold him to Lloyd Teater I thought I had hit the big time!"

Saddlebreds in Middle Tennessee were strong in those years. Don continued to work horses throughout high school and spent summers with Doss Stanton at Oman Stables and Tom Pigue at Garrett Stables where he rubbed horses and watched and learned. "I guess I just kept coming home and trying to apply what I had seen until I went to work for someone else," said Judd.

Don attended Tennessee Tech and played basketball before marrying and starting a family. He worked for Ellis Waggoner at Brownview Farm. After a year, he took a private job in Knoxville and then went to Happy Valley Farm with Sam Brannon. Here he helped train champions Lily Merrell, Flavor Taste, Indiana Peavine, Eyre Lad and Valley Witch.

Stints with John Crawford and Ruxer Farm, where he managed the breeding operation with Supreme Sultan and Mr. Magic Man and worked the last crop of Valley

View Supreme babies led him to Rock Creek where he furthered his skills under the guidance of Ed Teater. When Ed moved to Dodge Stables, Don opened his own barns in Prospect and Simpsonville, Kentucky. World's champions in those years included Nibley Dean, Among the Stars, Hot Property and top Hackney pony Holiday's King Commander.

Eight years later, he went to Pennsylvania and then to Castle Hills Farms, which would be his last stop before moving to Florida. He was a big part of the breeding and training programs at Castle Hills. In 1981 a decision was made to put their stallion Sultan's Santana back to work in an effort to get him into better order. On Saturday night of the Kentucky State Fair, after being out of the show ring for 8 years, Sultan's Santana was crowned World's Grand Champion Fine Harness horse with Don. Other World's Champions in those years were Baron Von Steuben, That Special Flavor, Oh By George, Man Alive, Olympic Flame, Grandview's Duchess Set the Style and Stop the Music.

During his first year in Florida, Don met a family that would change the course of his future. Barbara and Todd Woods and daughters Linda and Beth were well established in the Saddlebred and thoroughbred industries. After a brief stint on a private job, Don joined forces with the Woods family to develop one of the premier Saddlebred farms in the Southeast.

Twenty-eight years later, Don continues to train and develop World and National champions. Sons Rick and Ron are a big part of Judd Stables and share in the day to day operation keeping it a family business. Don with partner Maria Gilman have made many more National and World champions including many World's Championships for Barbara Woods with her incredible CH Sweet Virginia. Others are Pagan Prince, Passion, Winter Day, Gypsy Supreme, Like An Admiral, Callaway's Independence Day, Undulata's Perfect Gift, Keeper of the Stars, Discover, LA Boca Raton, Master and Commander, Callaway's Gentlemen's Agreement, Hello Moto, Undulata's Secret Rendezvous, Rondo and Walterway's Pardon Me.