

Enshrinement in Columbia Equestrian's Gayle Lampe

By Kary Booher



Ask renowned equestrian rider, judge and instructor Gayle Lampe on her advice to anyone interested in following in her footsteps and you can hear the passion for the sport in her voice.

“Just love it. Go to the barn. Eat it. Breathe it. Sleep it,” Lampe said. “Don’t do anything else.”

In essence, that’s how Lampe has led her life since taking her first ride at age 8 before going on to carve out quite a career

in equestrian – a career that is leading to induction into the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame.

Lampe is among the Enshrinement in Columbia Class of 2015 presented by Great Southern Bank. The ceremony, sponsored by Great Southern Bank and presented by Miller Professional Imaging/Mpix, is scheduled on Sunday, Nov. 15 at the Holiday Inn Executive Center in Columbia. For tickets, call 417-889-3100.

Lampe is professor emeritus at William Woods University in Fulton after being the saddle seat program director there for 41 years. She holds judges’ cards in nine equestrian disciplines and has judged competitions in 43 states as well as Australia, Canada, Great Britain and South Africa. She also has conducted clinics in 26 states and three foreign countries.

Along the way, multiple times Lampe has judged the United States Arabian and Half-Arabian Nationals, Youth Nationals, the National Show Horse Final, the Grand National and World Championship Morgan Horse Show, the Saddle Seat Medal Finals, the UPHA Challenge Cup Finals at the American Royal, Good Hands Finals at Madison Square Garden, the Northampton Morgan Horse Show and South Africa’s National Championship Saddlebred Show.

But that’s only a glimpse of Lampe’s career, which includes coaching the 1996 U.S. Saddle Seat equitation team to a gold medal at the World Cup Competition held with Equitana in Louisville.

“I grew up in Louisville and just about everybody in Louisville took riding lessons when they were growing up. It stuck with me. I loved it,” Lampe said, adding that she had supportive parents. “My parents didn’t love horses, but they loved me. I was at the barn every minute I wasn’t in high school. When I wasn’t doing high school stuff, I’d spend time with trainers in the barn, in the trenches and didn’t miss a trick. You wouldn’t leave horse shows until after 2 or 3 in the morning, because early in the morning is when you could watch the trainers use their secret training methods.”

Stephens College brought Lampe to Missouri years ago, and she credits a number of trainers as inspiration. But now she is an inspiration to many, in part because Lampe took equestrian science to a new level. She created a

path to horse riding and showing, rather than a standard path toward veterinarian work.

In many ways, you can say she wrote the book on all this – and actually did write a book, in 1996, titled *Riding For Success, Both In and Out of the Show Ring*. A revised edition was published in 2012.

In addition to teaching and judging, Lampe also has shown Saddlebreds, Morgans and Arabians. In 1979, she showed Zephyr’s King Moro to win the Ladies Park Horse Under Saddle Championships at the Grand National Morgan Horse Show. In 1984, she showed the Arabian stallion, D.W. Bon fire, to an undefeated season while he was under the ownership of Ruxer Farms.

In 2003, she showed her own horse, Callaway’s Born to Win, to earn the Ladies Five-Gaited Championships title at the World Championships Saddlebred show at the Kentucky State Fair.

Born to Win arguably is one of the top five saddledbred horses in history. At the United Professional Horseman’s Association American Royal National Championship Horse Show, Lampe won the Five-Gaited Ladies National Championship on Born to Win in 2003, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010. Callaway’s Born to Win, shown by Lampe, also was ranked by the United States Equestrian Federation as the National Five-Gaited Open Horse of the Year for 2004, 2006, 2007, 2010 and 2012.

In 2010, Lampe and Born to Win were selected to perform in the opening ceremonies for the World Equestrian Games in Lexington, Ky.

“I don’t know if anybody has done what she has done in the horse world,” said Mary Marcum Orr, a 2001 William Woods graduate and now a North Carolina-based trainer and riding instructor. Orr was the youngest woman, at age 27, to win the Three-Gated World Championship. “She’s had so many students go on and be incredibly successful. She’s been instrumental in us getting jobs.”

It’s probably no wonder, then, that Lampe has been awarded the United Professional Horseman’s Association Equestrian Instructor of the Year, the Missouri-Kansas Horse Person of the Year at the American Royal Horse Show and the “Distinguished Professor Award” winner at the American Saddledbred Horse Convention.

In 2007, she received the Audrey Gutridge Award at the World Championship Saddle Horse Show at the Kentucky State Fair; and later that year the American Riding Instructor’s Association, awarded her the title of “Master Instructor.”

In 2014, Lampe received the Missouri Horse Shows Association Horseperson of the Year award for her dedication and devotion to equestrian. In other words, her heart is in the right place.

“She’s brought a lot of people – amateurs and new people – into the business,” Orr said. “If you don’t go to William Woods, she wants you to go to some other school to be in the horse business.”