

# DEARDORFF STABLE

## A Family Affair

by Sara Pizzuto

Most horse trainers and riders have climbed aboard too many different horses to count. However, a young Allison Deardorff kept count, making a list of each horse that she was given the chance to ride and show. Allison's rapidly growing list soon tallied over 100 horses by the time she turned 22. She has since added a number of world's champions and renowned Saddlebreds to this list as the established trainer at Deardorff Stable.

"I knew I was going to be a horse trainer forever," Allison said. "Though I tried to convince myself otherwise for a few years, but I was literally obsessed with showing as a child."

Allison was raised in a family that shared this same passion, as her father and grandfather were both well established in the Saddlebred industry. Her mother was also involved with horses, growing up showing hunters and jumpers.

"I don't really remember getting started with horses," she said. "My dad has been a horse trainer since before I was born so naturally horses have always been part of my life."

Allison and her father, Don Deardorff, train horses alongside each other at their Oregon farm. Don's lengthy career with horses began with his father, Willard. Don received a Saddlebred of his own from his father when he was just 10 years old. Don trained him over the next four years and competed with him at local 4-H shows.

"By this time, we had a farm full of Saddlebred horses that we had raised," Don said. "I just naturally got involved handling and training them. Most of what I did initially was self-taught."

This farm of Saddlebreds began with a single mare. Willard then bred the mare, and bought the stallion they bred her to, and this theme continued from there.

"Due to Dad's collective nature, within a few years we had 20 broodmares," Don said. "He read a lot about the breed, its history and various bloodlines. Our stallion was by Sun Beau, the sire of Beau Fortune and out of a Stonewall King mare. Dad collected a lot of interesting mares. We had a daughter of Noble Kalarama and another was a full sister to the dam of Valley View Supreme. He and I continued that collective nature for decades."

Their collection included their Doubletrees breeding program, which grew from 20 to 35 mares when Don was in his thirties. They were raising close to 25 colts per year, all centered around a stallion by the name of Doubletrees General D.

"We still have daughters and granddaughters of him in our breeding program," Don said. "In fact, our current stallion Doubletrees All Of The Above is out of a General D. daughter."

The father and son duo developed quite the partnership together. Willard raised the young horses while self-taught Don trained and showed them.



"Interestingly, even though there were a lot of situations where we didn't agree, the horses always kept us together," Don said.

Horses are what also tied Don to his daughter Allison. Their bond was strengthened through these animals from the moment Allison was born. As a child, nine-year-old Allison would accompany Don to weekend schooling shows. Allison would show her Morgan Boston Marquis in a few classes on Saturday morning, before heading back to the barn so Don could work horses. Once Allison got old enough to work the horses herself, Don would allow her to select young horses from the field to train, show, and sell.

While in high school, Allison had 9-10 horses on her show string that she was responsible for training. She would awake early in the morning to work at least four of the horses before school and finished training the remainder in the afternoon.

"Most days it worked out, other days I didn't do my homework," she said. "At the time, I just thought it was fun but later I realized the value of having a large number of horses available to me to learn from that early in my life. Because of this opportunity I have a lot of favorite memories and some questionable ones too. 'Training' your own young horses at 14 years old doesn't always pan out."

However, Allison's training and riding abilities continued to improve. Don was kind enough to let her rack her own colts at home. She was 16 when she got her first gaited colt ready to show. Her efforts paid off at Santa Barbara, where she entered and won. She also achieved success at Louisville as a catch rider and earned a coveted spot on the US Saddle Seat World Cup Team.

During Allison's senior year of high school, she informed her parents of her idea to skip college and begin working for Don full time. This did not go over well with either of her parents, who encouraged their

1. Don and Allison attend a variety of horse shows together, including Del Mar Charity Fair.

2. Don and Brooke were alongside Allison and Marc at their 2016 wedding in Santorini, Greece.

3. Marc and Allison's wedding party included best man Evan Orr, maid of honor Mary Orr, and bridesmaids Breanne Thompson and Julie Broder.

daughter to attend four years of college regardless of her job goals. Allison graduated from William Woods University as a political science major, with a minor in Spanish.

She was able to ride throughout school, while learning alongside Gayle Lampe and Virgil Helm.

"I was fortunate enough to learn from Gayle, whom I admire and refer to everyday," Allison said. "Virgil and Sandra were also a huge part of my life when they lived in Oregon, so being able to be near them during college made me feel at home in Missouri."

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Allison worked for another mentor, John T. Jones, at Rosemont Manor after college. She said it was an invaluable experience that she is grateful for every day.

"At the time he had a large breeding program and also worked young horses for a number of other major breeders," she said. "This provided an unparalleled opportunity to work with some wonderful young horses and learn from the best. Johnny and I remain close to this day and this year we got to judge Louisville together."

Eventually, Allison left Rosemont Manor to return home and work for her dad. She enrolled in a master's degree program to earn her MBA while simultaneously training the farm's string of show horses.

Now, Don and Allison are responsible for working close to 50 horses, 15 of which are their own young ones. Work for Allison begins early in the morning while it's still quiet in the barn. She splits her work evenly with her father, according to who they feel will do best by the horse.

"Some horses suit her better than me or vice versa," Don said. "We both have our own preferences. When it comes to training or lessons, I think it is about 50/50. We also can overlap each other in that I will help her with her horses or lessons and she does the same for me."

Erin Cummings, a graduate of Stephens College, is their newly hired assistant trainer who helps Don and Allison by working both young horses and show horses. Together, the team helps to instruct their amateurs and junior exhibitors who come to ride once or twice weekly.

"We are very fortunate to have a wonderful group of horses and riders right now," Allison said. "Sometimes I have to pinch myself to believe that we are this blessed."

Allison is also blessed to have the support of her husband Marc Hevern. Together, they started Allmarc LLC in 2013, which is a small horse hauling business. Marc works as a full-time police officer, but is able to get time off of work to do most of the company's semi hauling.

"It seemed like a natural side business since we were going to shows anyway and there was a need for a local Northwest horse show hauler," Marc said.

The company now has four trailers, including a semi, and is responsible for shipping the show strings of Deardorff Stable and other surrounding barns to and from the shows. In September, Marc's company transported 54 horses to the NWSA Fall Classic Horse Show, which was about half of the total horses at the show.

The hauling business isn't the only other component of Deardorff Stable. There are 100 horses on the property in addition to beef cattle. A section of the farm is also used for growing Christmas Trees that are harvested every year, which draws a crowd of helicopters roaming the area during the holiday season.

Allison says that it's her family's hard work that is the key to the many successful facets of the farm.

"Work hard even if it's hard," she said. "The only thing I know how to do is put my head down and work. When I



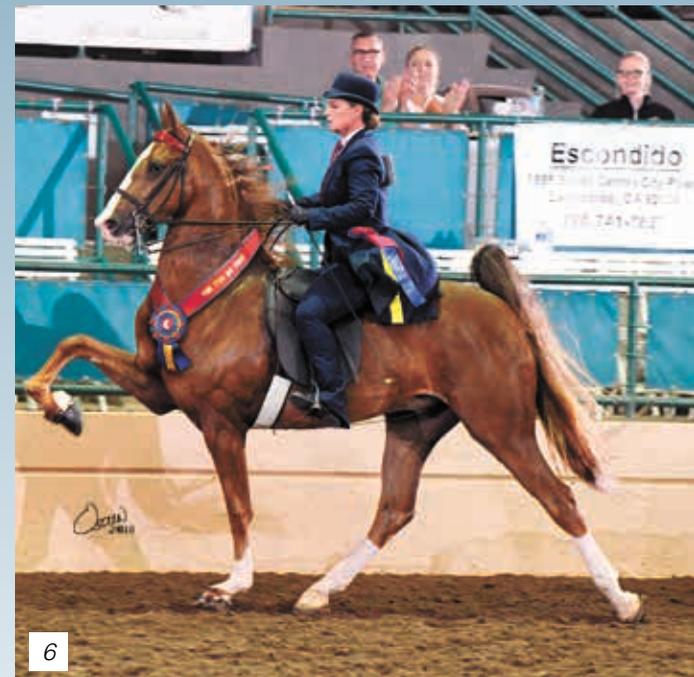
worked for Johnny, he told me one time when I was struggling, 'Being successful at this job is not black magic, just get up every morning, go to work, it'll pay off.' I have lived by this statement ever since."

Don, Brooke, and Allison's combined efforts have created a fun environment for their clients to enjoy the American Saddlebred. Though Marc was married into the breed, he said that he has made lifelong friends in the Saddlebred industry.

"I love whatever makes my wife happy and she loves Saddlebreds," he joked. "In all seriousness, more than any other breed I have been around, Saddlebreds relate to people in a more personable way and have a way of drawing you in and making you feel special to be part of their lives. I have also seen the way this breed brings people from all different parts of the world and ways of life together."

Allison said that this breed has also been a key in bringing her family together. She views it as a blessing that many people don't have.

"Knowing that my dad always has my best interests in mind and will support me unconditionally at work is also a luxury that most people don't experience," she said. "We definitely have disagreements and of course, both of us are always right. That being said, at the end of the day, we are family and we will have



4. Deardorff Stable has celebrated a successful 2018 season including the NWSA Fall Classic where they showed 34 horses.

5. Allison had the honor of judging Louisville this year and celebrated stake night with Marc.

6. Undulata's GQ and Allison have enjoyed much success in the junior five-gaited division and won the Five-Gaited Stake classes at Charity Fair and NWSA Fall Classic as well.

7. GQ's full brother, Undulata's Mick Jagger has also made victory passes in the same division with Don.

each other's backs. I am fortunate to have always been close with my dad and I think of him as not only a father but as a mentor and friend who I can always go to for help and support no matter what."

Don echoed this statement and is looking forward to continuing the family's deep-rooted history with the breed for years to come.

"Well, it's been my life, so it is very rewarding to me that Allison shares my passion in this love of Saddlebred horses. And Doubletrees Farm might continue for a while. I have a 10-year-old grandniece who is riding with us. So who knows. That might stretch it out for another generation."