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# The Ultimate Family Horse

## CH AN HEIR ABOUT HER

BY BOB FUNKHOUSER

Beautiful and talented with a Supreme Heir mind and attitude, CH An Heir About Her had all the right ingredients to not only be a history-making, three-time World's Grand Champion Three-Gaited sensation, but also the ultimate family horse. And then she followed up a remarkable show career with Broodmare Hall of Fame status.

With all of that, the pain that was felt by her passing at Ever Glades Farm at the age of 21 reached several people, including her breeder, former trainer, her huge Ever Glades family, and her fans. From the day she was born, she was one of a kind.

“Marcy Lafferty actually named her,” explained her breeder and first owner, Joan Lurie of Willowbank Farm. “She was here at the farm looking at some of her babies and I showed her

this filly and she said, ‘Oh, Joanie, there’s such an air about her.’ She was definitely different from the first second she stepped in the world. She was so beautiful with such a presence.”

Lurie had bought her dam, Sweet Illusion W.F. (BHF) to breed to Attaché, however, he died before that mating could happen so she bred her to Supreme Heir. The first foal was world’s champion of champions CH Heir Style, followed by world’s champion of champions CH Sultry Heiress and then world’s champion Careless Heiress. Sometimes things just work out!

Then, in 1999, full sibling An Heir About Her hits the ground. The best was yet to come.

“When Joan [Lurie] first weaned her, I was down there and knew I had to have her,” said Chris Reiser in a 2002 Year In Review dedication story

to the great mare. “I didn’t have any clients who would buy weanlings, but I never forgot about her. When my client Steve Hanes sold his last horse (and wanted another) I told him this was the one and he trusted me.” Hanes was a self-proclaimed novice owner and he had never owned a prospect but he jumped in head first. They purchased her as a yearling.

“Chris [Reiser] bought her and he left her here for a while so I started her in lines,” said Lurie. “It was like she already knew everything. She

△ The joy that CH An Heir About Her brought to Sarah Rowland, whether that be winning championships herself or watching her granddaughters ride to top honors, was immeasurable.

bounced off her hocks, bent her neck and trotted big. I didn't do anything; I could have been a fence post."

When Reiser got her home, he was more than thrilled with the purchase.

"This filly was so game at first that I never dreamed she would get ready to show as a two-year-old," said Reiser in that Year In Review dedication. "You couldn't make any noise around her. Everything was quiet and easy. Then it was like everything changed overnight and I took her to Rock Creek just to work her as she was still really green.

"I showed her to two people and priced her and they basically told me I was crazy. From there we decided to just keep quiet and wait until we were ready to go to the horse show. I worked her on the big race track at Dayton a few weeks before Louisville and people came running out from everywhere to watch her. I knew we were ready."

Ready she was. She won the Two-Year-Old Three-Gaited World's Championship that year and trainers were literally running up the

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chute after Reiser to get a price on the exquisite sensation.

The Reiser/Hanes team held on to the filly believing there was more to come. As a three-year-old she was a standout, winning at both Rock Creek and Lexington before returning to Freedom Hall that August. Again, victory was theirs, this time in the ASHA National Three-Year-Old Three-Gaited Futurity. They then made the bold move to return to the green shavings on Saturday night where CH An Heir About Her made history as only the second three-year-old to win the World's Grand Champion Three-Gaited title, the first being Forest Song with Garland Bradshaw back in 1966.

The grand mare and Reiser would win the Three-Gaited 15.2 & Under Stakes and world's grand championships the following two years as well. In 2004, she was also the qualifying winner and Three-Gaited Grand Champion at Lexington Junior League and the American Royal, adding a Triple Crown to her glowing achievements.

It was also at that UPHA/American Royal that Sarah Rowland's family and friends con-



photo by Doug Shiftlet

△ Chris Reiser picked CH An About Her out as a weanling and purchased her as a yearling for customer Steve Hanes. Together, they would win (3) World's Grand Champion Three-Gaited titles.

◁ Marjorie Townsend and the great mare took over Freedom Hall in a four-horse workout to be crowned the 2010 World's Champion of Champions Junior Exhibitor Three-Gaited 14-17 titleholders.

# “SHE IS THE CORNERSTONE BROODMARE OF A LOT OF WHAT WE ARE SHOWING”

▷ In addition to a prolific show career, the Supreme Heir daughter became a Broodmare Hall of Fame producer. Among her get is the Rowland's world's champion Undulata's Heir Apparent (pictured) who is now a world's champion producing sire.



vinced her that CH An Heir About Her was the one for her. She wasn't for sure, however, her husband Landon was very enthusiastic about the possibility. They debuted at Rock Creek the next summer, winning the Ladies Three-Gaited class and championship under the direction of Hoppy Bennett. That year at Louisville they were reserve world's champions and would finish the year at the Royal, winning the Three-Gaited National Championship and amateur under 15.2 qualifier.

Sarah would show the mare the next few seasons, winning amateur championships at Rock Creek, Reserve World's Champion of Champions Ladies Three-Gaited honors, and the Amateur Three-Gaited National Championship.

Then, in 2007, the next step for CH An Heir About Her becoming the ultimate family horse took place as granddaughter Marjorie Townsend debuted "Ahah," as the family called her, to win the Junior Exhibitor Three-Gaited National Championship and qualifier. The two would continue to share Ahah with Marjorie winning another national championship the following year.

Home at Ever Glades Farm, Marjorie and Ahah had an incredible 2010, winning the qualifier and Junior Exhibitor Three-Gaited Grand Championships at UPHA Chapter 5 and Midwest Charity. Missy Hughes Smith then guided the duo to the World's Champion of Champions Junior Exhibitor Three-Gaited 14-17 roses after a four-horse workout, as well as a victory pass in division one of the qualifier. What a moment for the Rowland family! "In that workout she took it to another level as she can do," said Hughes Smith.

With a few more shows under their belt, Marjorie then turned the reins over to cousin Alice Rowland. After a blue ribbon ride at Central States, they took on the best of the best at Louisville and returned to Kansas City with World's Champion Junior Exhibitor Three-Gaited 13 & Under Sec. I and Reserve World's Champion

of Champions Junior Exhibitor Three-Gaited 13 & Under titles. Their season finale resulted in another Junior Exhibitor Three-Gaited 13 & Under National Championship.

Next up! Pint-sized Harriet Townsend got the call for the 2012 season. What a stir they created, sweeping the junior exhibitor division at Des Moines in their debut before moving on to the Junior Exhibitor Three-Gaited Championship at UPHA Chapter 5 and then the 13 & under championship and qualifier at the famed Midwest Charity. There would be two more victory passes at Central States before they hit the bright lights of Freedom Hall. The "big" mare and the little rider came away with a reserve world's champion title in their first trip to Louisville together.

"The first time Harriet ever cantered her, there was no part of her touching the saddle," laughed Missy Hughes Smith. "She had a canter that would pop you right out of the saddle because she was so hocky. That was one of the things we all had to learn how to do, stay in the middle of the saddle at the canter. The first few shows with Harriet, people were wondering if she would stay on and I would respond, 'yeah, she's alright.'"

Getting the celebrated world's grand champion to train was such an opportunity for Ever Glades' resident trainer, Hughes Smith.

"It was hard for Marjorie to get to Kentucky to practice so Sarah decided to bring her home. I was excited, but it was a little overwhelming as I was thinking, 'what were the expectations?' Everyone was great and I just wanted to put together the best combinations I could.

"She always showed a little better the second class so I first wanted to try and figure that out. I found out that if you didn't show her the ring before she showed, she would back off a little in the first class. She would still have her head as high as it could go and went a huge trot but it was almost like trotting in place. We found that if we

did get her to the ring first she was much more confident in that first class.

"I can't say enough about what she has been for Sarah and the girls. It was truly an honor to be a part of her life."

As if all she did for the Rowland family in the show ring wasn't enough, she proved to be just as proficient as a producer, while earning Broodmare Hall of Fame status.

"She is the cornerstone broodmare of a lot of what we are showing," said Hughes Smith.

Before coming to Ever Glades, CH An Heir About Her's first foal was world's champion CH Pola Negri (by Exalted Effect). She was followed by world's champion Undulata's Heir Apparent (by Undulata's Nutcracker), who is now Ever Glades' highly rated breeding stallion. Also to her credit are reserve world's champion Undulata's Hullabaloo and reserve world's champion of champions St. Nick EGF.

"We have a few youngsters that we're excited about, including a three-year-old named Loula Long (by Nutcracker's Nirvana)," said Hughes Smith. "Between Ahah and Heir Apparent, it's fun to see what they produce.

"She was a wonderful broodmare but she was not on board with flies. When I first started turning her out we tried every body cover that they sell because she couldn't stand for a fly to touch her. You never quite knew what to expect with An Heir About Her."

What a legacy she left; what memories she has provided from her first breath to her last. Very few have that rare combination of beauty, talent and attitude, but with heavy doses of all three, CH An Heir About Her has certainly written a chapter that will forever be remembered in the American Saddlebred world. Joan Lurie might have said it best.

"She was special from the get go. She was like a chiseled porcelain, so beautiful, so perfect."