



Doc and Dotty Raun led a wonderful life filled with family and horse shows.

Doc Raun

A Slice of Americana and The Show Horse Industry

by Bob Funkhouser

The news of the passing of Reedannland's iconic Doc Raun, hit many throughout the American Saddlebred and Hackney industries hard. He has touched so many people, associations, horses and ponies that the Doc imprint is everywhere you look. When this writer heard the news many thoughts and great memories came flooding back. One was a phone call I made to him as President of ASHA. I said, 'Doc, I'd like you to serve on a panel at the Convention that will cover the state of the breeding industry and the programs we have here at ASHA.' He said, "Bob, I'd be glad to, except you don't want me." I said, 'Doc, we very much want your expertise.' He responded, "I'll have some things to say you don't want to hear. I don't agree with some of those programs that are in place now like the First Time Breeders."

Doc served on that panel and shared his views in a most respectful way, all the while making his point clear!

That's who he was; honest, straight up and full of the wisdom that came with being a hearty Iowa farmer/veterinarian/husband/father/grandfather/trainer and breeder. He was a rare breed. Many have revered the man whose character was above reproach, whose talents and successes spread over many areas of the show horse business for decades and whose work ethic and knowledge were second to none. And on Friday, November 8th, at the age of 92, he was reunited in heaven with the love of his life, the late Dotty Raun.

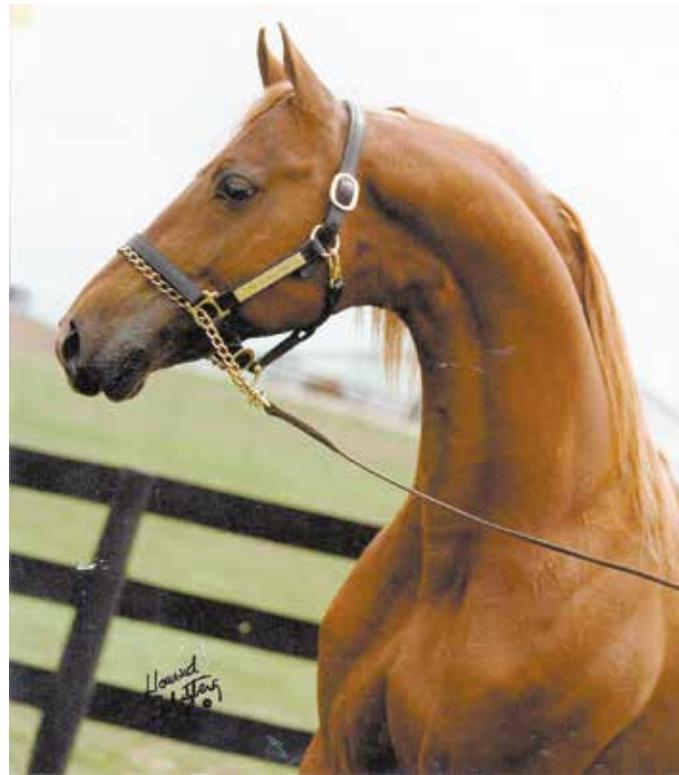


The great stallion Cassilis Troubador was an early star for Doc Raun.

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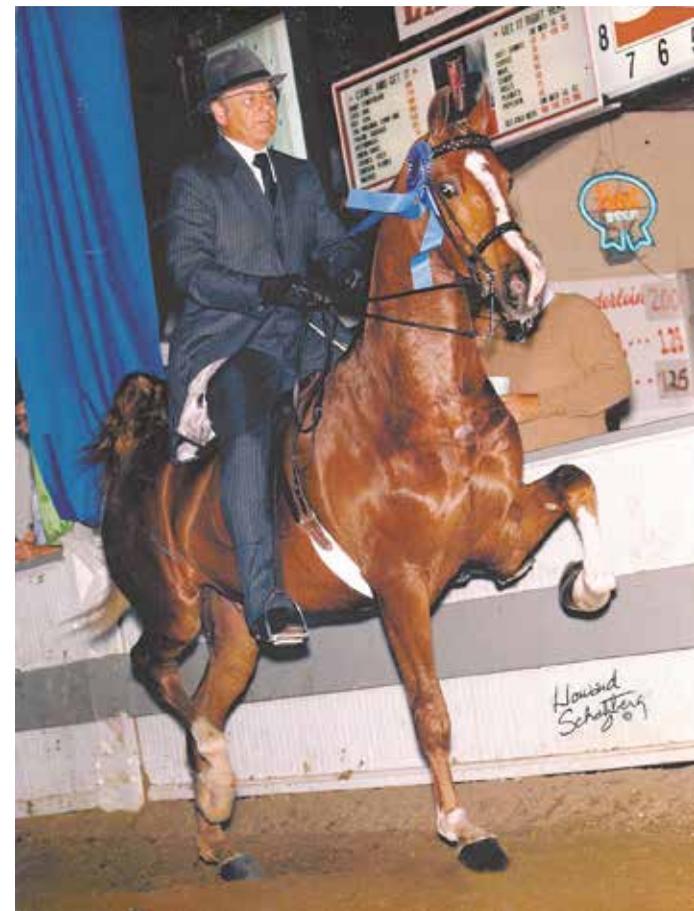


Ahead of their time, Doc and Dotty syndicated Stonewall's Main Event and directed a rewarding breeding career for the Starheart Stonewall son and his shareholders.



Phi Slama Jama was an exceptional World's Champion Yearling and when purchased by Doc Raun returned to Louisville the next year to win the Two-Year-Old Fine Harness Stallion/Gelding World's Championship. He went on to be an extremely successful sire for Reedannland as well.

Doc bred and developed countless champions over the years. He is pictured here with the great CH Reedann's Box Seat.



his future bride Dotty. The whole time he had the veterinary practice he kept horses and ponies on some property in Des Moines that would eventually become Reedannland. They sold the practice in 1976 and opened that breeding operation.

"I thought I'd try to make a living in the horse business," said Dr. Raun. "I told Dotty we'd give it three years and if it didn't work I'd go back to the practice.

"After the first year, I wasn't going to make it," he added. "I had to sit down and look at this thing. I thought to myself, there were three ways

UPHA and AHHS Hall of Famer Dr. Alan Raun kept the Des Moines, Iowa, area on the map for five decades with a well-known breeding and training operation for American Saddlebreds and Hackney Ponies known as Reedannland. Very few have been able to keep a good size breeding

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and show operation going at the same time at a high level for an extended period of time, much less do it with two different breeds. His contributions as a trainer and breeder have been well documented, thus the Hall of Fame status, however, it was his character and outlook on life that most influenced those who were fortunate enough to spend time learning from one of the best.

"When I first thought about going to work for a trainer for the experience, I asked my stepdad, Jim Koller, whom I should work for and he immediately said, 'Doc Raun,' " said Glenn T. Werry in Doc's Year In Review Dedication story. "I asked him, 'why Doc Raun?' and he said, 'because you'll learn a heck of a lot more about life than you will training horses.' It was the best time of my life."

So how did a veterinarian become a horse trainer/breeder who for 42 years had the time of his life doing something he loved second only to his faith and family?

"When I was six years old I got a yearling Shetland for my birthday," explained Dr. Raun in that earlier dedication story. "We always had horses or ponies around when I was growing up. Following the service (infantry in WWII) I took a grooming job with Merle White in Waterloo, Iowa, and fell in love with the American Saddlebred. I bought my first Hackney in 1952.

"I had applied for vet school but thought I'd try training and then I got accepted to vet school, which led to a large animal (beef cattle/horses) practice for 25 years."

It was while he was studying veterinary medicine at Iowa State University that Dr. Raun met

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to make money in this business: have a lesson program, stand a popular stallion and buying and selling. I tried to buy [Sultan's] Santana but couldn't get it done. [Stonewall's] Main Event was number two behind Supreme Sultan so I bought him and syndicated him. There were 20 shares; we shared in the expenses and income. Everyone got money back and had free breedings for nine years. It was an innovative idea that worked."

Breeding horses had always been of great interest to Dr. Raun. His first success came in the '50s when he crossed a Saddlebred mare with a Hackney stallion and the result was Jimmy Joe who went on to be a famous world's champion three-gaited pony. It was during this time that Dr. Raun started raising horses, ponies and children, six to be exact. Growing up, all of the Raun children were involved with the farm. Daughters Becky Westberg, Beth Rowles and Kate Raun continued to show, while brother Jeff managed the breeding operation for his parents. Dr. Raun has done a great job raising children, horses and ponies with many outstanding characteristics that have been passed down two and three generations.

In addition to the chart topping Stonewall's Main Event, Reedannland has been home to noted stallions Buck Rogers, Phi Slama Jama, CH The Talk Of The Town, Reedann's Top Gun, County Treasure and The Mystery Writer, among others. This group has produced many stars over the decades.

Some of the Reedannland products that were bred and/or developed and sold that have made headlines include Cactus Flower, Big Brown Bess, CH Shivaree, CH Reedann's Box Seat, CH Reedann's Nighty Nite, CH My Chanel, Wrapped In Rainbows, CH Jane Doe, Reedann's Phancy Phootwork, CH Reedann's Phinery, What A Phine Ruby, World's Grand Champion Three-Gaited CH

One For The Road, Intoxicating Conversation, Va Bene, World's Grand Champion Five-Gaited CH Breaking News, Fortunately Mine, Callaway's Head Over Heels, Santana's Night Moves, Jama Rose, Treasure The Warmth, Reedann's Fight Night, Calle Lilly, Heir Color, Jaunty Janette, Reedann's Whispering Leaves, It's Dan The Man, Break On Through, Mystery Talk and Reedann's Royal Gossip.

**"DOC WAS INCREDIBLY INTELLIGENT AND SURROUNDED HIMSELF WITH GOOD PEOPLE,
- GLENN T. WERRY**

"Doc Raun has always been a student of the breed," said the late Dick Boettcher in an earlier interview. "He sees what crosses well and buys the type of mares he knows will fit into his program. That's why for all these years, with all the different people who have trained with Doc Raun, it has stayed very consistent. He knows the type of horse he wants to breed. His tenacity might be his best asset. If he puts his mind to something, he's going to do it."

"Doc was incredibly intelligent and surrounded himself with good people," added Glenn T. Werry. "It's a team thing with Doc. He has consistently had a good staff from the breeding barn to the show barn. He also has great vision and a consistent plan. He's very specific in what he looks for in crosses. Even today at his age, he's talking about what he's going to be doing three and five years down the road. He's always got a plan."

Dr. Raun has been just as successful producing professionals for the industry. In addition to the above mentioned Dick Boettcher and Glenn T. Werry, horsemen and women like Bruce Coughenower, Wyatt DeHart, Skip Shenker, Chris Gantley, Bob Brison, Liz Kinney, Kenny Smith, Mike Dumas, Rob Kritzler, Sharon Backer, Jay Larkin, Kelly Freeman, Jaime Medina, Louis Louw, Mike Breeggemann, Mark Wilson, Collette Keen, Scott Wendt, Joel Dornignac and Dave Hysaw are among those who have earned a master's degree at the University of Reedannland.

"My first assistant trainer job was with Dr. Raun. I was 17," said Bob Brison from that Year In Review dedication story. "Boy, he put me right to work doing everything. We didn't really have grooms then. You got your own horse ready, worked it and put it away. Then you went on to the next one. It really was a great first job. If you had one that needed its teeth floated he would say, 'there are a couple of floats up there in the office.'

"I learned a great work ethic there. If Doc wasn't at the training barn he was at the breeding barn. He was right there beside you. I figured out a good work ethic would equal success. I really enjoyed Doc and that job. Still today, if you've got a problem or need some help with something he's there for you. And it doesn't have to be about horses."

"They were the kindest family I ever worked for and I'm very proud to be a part of the Reedannland family," added Kelly Freeman who worked and showed World's Champion Reedann's Whispering Leaves for Dr. Raun. "As far as training horses one of the things I remember most is that when we brought colts in to start working Doc had a system as to the way things are done and he wanted it followed. And, of course, he was always right. I remember I had a colt that I thought was going to be a good one and I started rushing and skipped some of the steps in Doc's



World's Grand Champion Harness Pony Brass Lass was one of several pony sensations throughout Doc's career. She was owned by the Wheeler Family's Cismont Manor.

Before becoming a multi-titled three-gaited world's champion for Jean McLean Davis, Reedann's Nitey Nite was a two-year-old harness sensation for Doc Raun.

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system. Well, it didn't work and he made me go back to step one and start all over."

What he did with the American Saddlebred has been enough to have an incredible career by any standards, yet he's done the same thing with the Hackney breed. He stood the prolific Hackney stallion Cassilis Troubador and raised many top ponies. Over the years the show string consisted of such greats as his favorite, World's Grand Champion Brass Lass, and world's and national champions Tijuana Princess, Reedann's Old Spice, Dr. T, Tijuana Starlet, Shamask, Lady Laliq, Right On, Dixie Jubilee, Gotta Lotta Pzazz, Cajun Cat, First Choice, Game Boy, Mastercraft's Gambler, Heartland Candidate, Heartland Alluring, Velvet King, Heartland Undeniable, Conqueror's Colleen and the multi-titled World's

respect between those two. The love between Doc and Dotty is almost storybook."

Honesty, family, happiness, work ethic, these are the type words that employees and former employees consistently use when talking about the former ASHA Board member and past AHHS President. A far greater tribute to the man than all of the accolades that have been bestowed upon him in and out of the show ring is the fact that "life lessons" are what those closest to him appreciate most. Doc Raun was a leader by his actions and his deeds and whether he knew it or not, those unspoken lessons had a profound impact.

"I introduced myself to Dr. Raun and asked him if he would take me on," said Glenn T. Werry. "We talked about it and he said if you want to do this, 'yes.'"

"HIS WORK ETHIC AND HONESTY ARE HIS BEST ATTRIBUTES AND HE EXPECTS THE SAME IN HIS EMPLOYEES."

Grand Champion Road Pony Twin Willow's McDreamy.

Doc Raun trained and showed horses up until the very end. His last show was the 2018 UPHA/American Royal where he drove Heartland Investor to a reserve finish in the Hackney Pony National Championship. His attitude towards work and the horses has been infectious. It is that attitude and his leadership that has allowed Reedannland to be consistent no matter what trainers were working alongside him. He believed in teamwork and everyone on his team was like family.

"He is a dedicated family man whose employees are his family," said Candy Henely from an earlier interview. She has worked at the farm in the office for nearly 30 years. "He's the first person I go to if I have a problem. It's wonderful to work some place where you are needed and wanted.

"His work ethic and honesty are his best attributes and he expects the same in his employees. As a family man there is so much mutual

"During my time there we talked a lot about life, not just horses. I enjoyed every minute of it. I learned way more about true happiness and hard work than anything I've ever done. Walking the fields at night with him and Dotty holding hands and looking at babies is something I'll never forget. His relationship with Dotty, God and family are what made him truly happy and the horses were something he truly enjoyed. There aren't enough words to describe how I feel about him."

Doc Raun is survived by a sister, Connie Raun Foss, his children Rebecca (Mark) Westberg, Beth (Craig) Rowles, Peg (Ron) Johnson, Jeff Raun, and Kate Raun; 15 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

His time here on earth was so productive, so rewarding. We should all take notice of the man he was and try to emulate his actions. If we only get partway there, we will make the world a much better place. Just think, he and Dotty are holding hands and taking walks again.



CH The Talk Of The Town represented Reedannland well in the breeding shed. Among others, he was the sire of Five-Gaited World's Grand Champion CH Breaking News.



One of the most popular teams of their time, Doc and CH It's Dan The Man. In 2009, they were the Junior Fine Harness World's Champion of Champions for Anna Marie Knipp.



Winners of three Road Pony National Championships, Doc Raun and Twin Willow's McDreamy won the first two of six consecutive world's grand championships for the dynamic speedster for then owner Deborah Jahn.