

# Macey Miles

THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE INSTRUCTOR OF THE YEAR

BY SARA PIZZUTO

In 2016, Macey Miles found herself in the winner's enclosure after the USEF Saddle Seat Gold Medal Finals. She was awarded with the prestigious gold medal and thus completed the elusive saddle seat equitation triple crown, becoming only the 12th rider in history to reach this pinnacle of equitation excellence. A mere four years later, Miles was once again in the USEF gold medal spotlight, but this time in a slightly different capacity—as a winning instructor. The same gold medal and accolades bestowed upon Macey Miles in 2016 were awarded to her student Dawson Archibald in 2020 as Archibald became the latest triple crown champion.

Though only 21 years of age, Macey Miles has quickly established herself as one of the industry's top equitation instructors, training a myriad of riders to world's and national titles in 2020. For her history-making season, her rise to the top of her field, and her ability to greatly impact the lives of her riders, Macey Miles has now earned your vote as the People's Choice Instructor Of The Year.

Macey Miles needs no introduction to the equine industry, having grown up on the back of a Saddlebred alongside her father Todd, a horse trainer, and mother Lesley, a former top exhibitor. She has amassed an impressive show record full of world titles as a phenom in the equitation ranks and a stellar performance rider. However, it wasn't until 2018 when Miles made the plunge to join her family in business at their Tennessee

based Milestone Stables and become an instructor. A conversation over dinner led both Todd and Lesley to ask their daughter if she was ready to assume the instructor position at Milestone.

"I was 19 at the time and knew I had a lot to learn physically and mentally and I had a lot of respect to earn," Macey Miles said. "After thinking, I knew I was up for the challenge. Being an instructor alongside my dad was always a goal of mine, but I never thought I would be doing that at age 19. I have been so supported by so many of my peers and will always be so grateful for the people who helped me take this leap of faith."

With Miles in her new position as an instructor, she went to work training new champions. She explained that while some of her students live close by, others are a plane ride away. Because of this, she works with each rider individually to develop a plan that works best for them.

"Since each rider learns differently and has different strengths and weaknesses, I cannot say I teach two riders the same," Miles said. "Each rider learns the fundamentals, then after that I try to customize a plan that fits each rider, whether that is more lunge lessons, figure work, lifting weights, yoga, whatever it may be to improve whatever weaknesses the rider may have."

Miles is also taking the lessons learned throughout her own personal equitation career and applying them to her students. She is quick



Todd and Lesley Miles encouraged daughter Macey to join their team at Milestone Stables in 2018. Though only 19 at the time, Macey Miles assumed the role as an instructor and has directed her riders to outstanding results in the show ring.

to remind them to wrap their knees to deal with the effects of no stirrup lessons and also helps her riders with the mental component of equitation.

"Equitation is not for the faint of heart," she said. "It requires a lot of perseverance. It is a very up and down battle, but that makes the victory so much sweeter. What makes a rider stronger is that when they get knocked down or defeated, they go home, go to work, and come back twice as strong. I think the biggest lesson for any athlete though is to be humble in victory and courageous in defeat."

That mentality coupled with the hard work done in the barn helped Macey Miles' riders to rise to the top of their divisions in 2020. While in Louisville, Miles directed her four Milestone Stables riders, Dawson Archibald, Graceanne Hoback, Savanna Graham, and Jacqueline Schatzberg, to world's titles in equitation. Miles was additionally the instructor of both the senior and junior equitation world's champion of champions with Archibald and Graham earning the roses in the hallowed grounds of Freedom Hall.

The success continued for Milestone with Karlyn Connolly earning national titles in the pleasure equitation ranks en route to Kansas City. While at the American Royal, Macey Miles celebrated the success of three of her riders in the prestigious USEF Saddle Seat Gold Medal Finals. Graceanne Hoback finished in the top ten with Dawson Archibald and Karlyn Connolly earning the tricolor sweep. This win also marked the completion of the triple crown for Archibald who had already topped The Good Hands Finals and the UPHA Senior Challenge Cup National Championship. Macey Miles became the youngest instructor in history to train a triple crown winner, as Archibald added her name to the list of champions, following behind Miles' triple crown victory in 2016.

"When I say Dawson has a passion for horses, I mean it," Miles said. "That kid eats, sleeps, and breathes horses. It was just as much of an honor to instruct her into her triple crown as it was to win it myself. Actually, it probably meant more. It meant so much to me to see the achievement in her eyes and gratefulness in her heart. Not only did it take preparation for Dawson, but I also had to keep myself mentally sharp and keep all of our riders on their 'A' game. Dawson's preparation was to just be relaxed, take deep breaths, and enjoy each ride as if it was her last."

It is evident, based on the success of Milestone's riders, that Macey Miles has played an integral role in training champions. However, she also prides herself in being a role model for her young students.

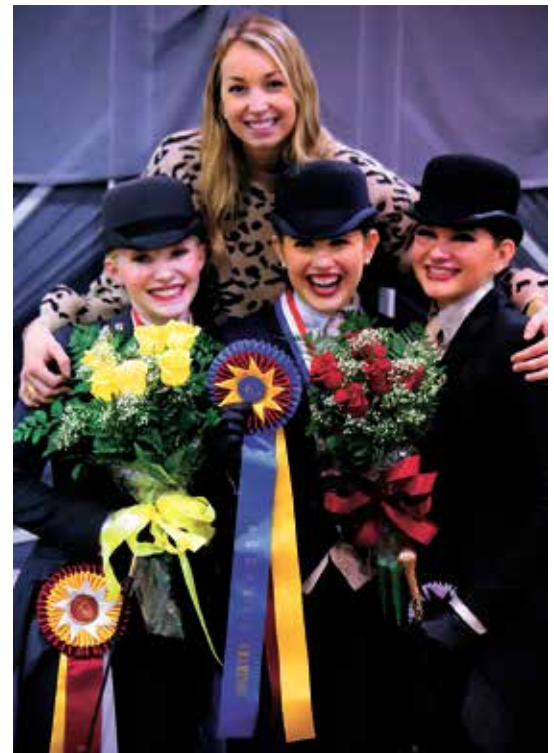
"I believe that when the riders see my sportsmanship, my expressions, my words, and my respect for myself and others, it really makes them step up," she said. "I hold each of them to a high standard and they should hold themselves accountable as well. I firmly believe that you become who you surround yourself with. It is very important to me that these kids learn not only riding lessons, but life lessons from me that they will carry with them forever."

With Macey Miles positively impacting the lives of her students, Milestone Stables is primed to have yet another record year in 2021. She encourages other young professionals to join the industry if they have a true passion for horses.

"There are days where my feet are sore, legs are tired, and my patience is about up," she said. "But then, there are days when a rider wins their first blue, or even when a rider carries those roses out of Freedom Hall that make those hard days so very worth it. I don't work with horses for the money. I work with horses because I enjoy the people I get to work with and love the animals with my whole soul. If you are someone who is wanting to start in the horse business as a young professional, my best advice is to be prepared for all those good days and bad. It will not be easy, but it will be so worth it."

Miles has taken her storied junior exhibitor career, and her love for the industry and carried it into her professional life. Regardless of her young age, Miles' talents, drive and ambition will carry her throughout her career in the horse business.

"When people would doubt me, it would make me work twice as hard to prove the doubters wrong," she said. "I hate the word 'can't.' If you tell me I can't do something, I will give it my all just to try to do it. Can't is a word that is not allowed around our barn."



Macey Miles celebrated a history-making season in 2020 with her equitation students. She joined national champion and triple crown winner Dawson Archibald, reserve national champion Karlyn Connolly and top ten finisher Graceanne Hoback following their success in the USEF Saddle Seat Gold Medal Finals.



Miles became the youngest instructor in history to train a triple crown winner. Dawson Archibald claimed this honor in 2020, four years after Macey Miles won the triple crown herself. They stopped to smell the roses in Louisville after Archibald was named the Senior Equitation World's Champion of Champions. Miles also instructed Savanna Graham to the roses in the junior equitation ranks that same week.