

# ROYAL SANTANA

---

*In a world where youth is admired, Royal Santana defied all odds when he won his first AQHA world title at 20.*

---

Foaled in May 1971, Royal Santana was born famous. He was the son of Peppy San, who was an AQHA Champion, a two-time National Cutting Horse Association champion and a member of the AQHA and NCHA Halls of Fame. Royal Santana was out of Royal Smart by Royal King. From C.N. "Chunky" Woodward's vast Douglas Lake Cattle Co. ranch in British Columbia, Royal Santana was sent into training as a 2-year-old to Matlock Rose in Texas. Rose had trained and shown Peppy San to the 1967 NCHA World Championship.

Frank Merrill bought Royal Santana in 1985 and Windward Stud became a virtual "Fountain of Youth" for the horse. Merrill's wife, Robin, showed Santana to the high-point cutting title and a sixth-place finish in amateur cutting at the AQHA World Championship Show in 1986. The Merrills' daughter, McKenzie, rode the gelding to win the youth high-point cutting title and sixth at the AQHA Youth World Championship Show in 1988. In 1990, at age 19, Royal Santana took McKenzie to win both the high-point and the AQHYA World Championship in cutting.

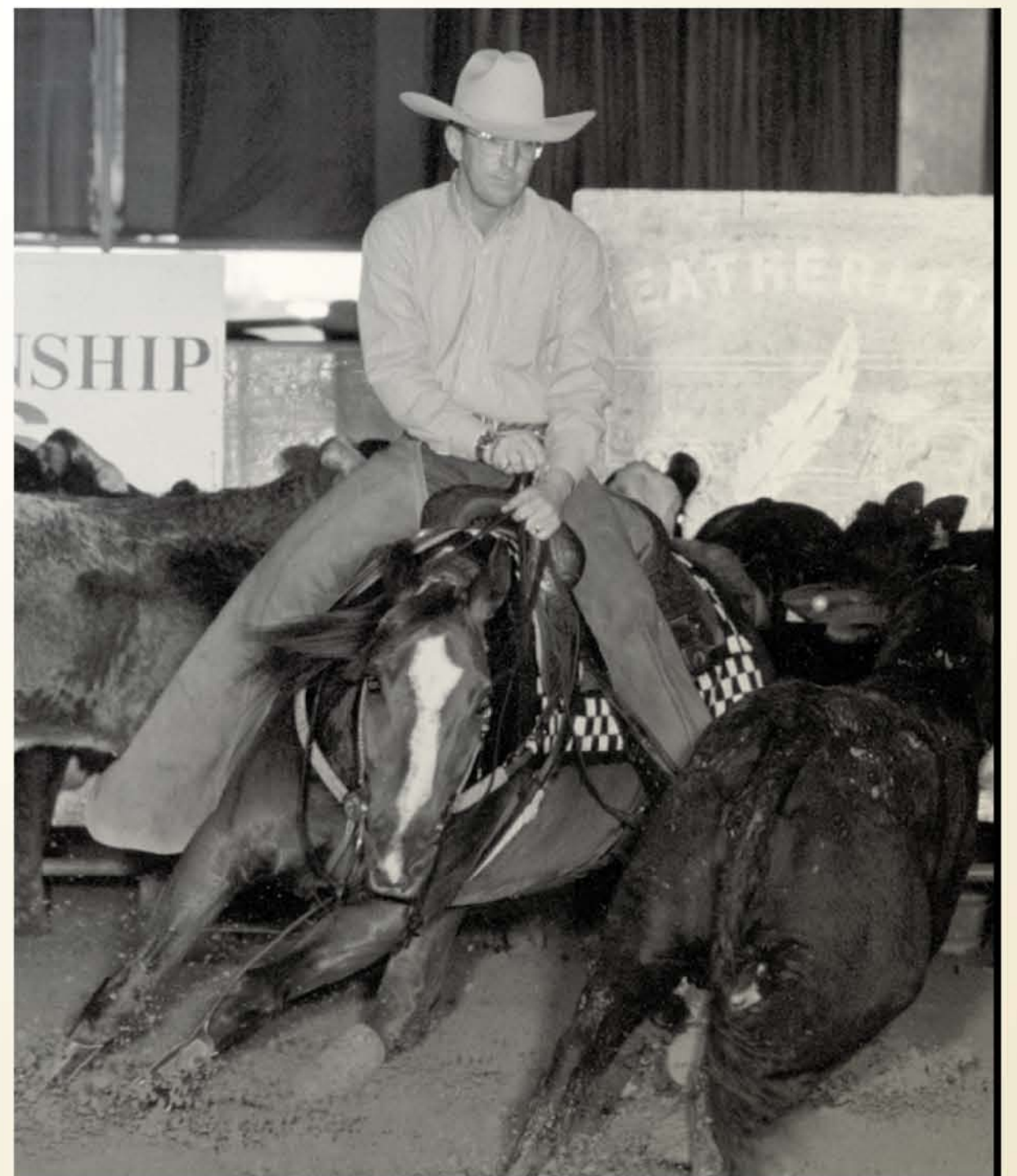
But an AQHA World Championship still eluded Royal Santana. In 1991, Merrill decided to give it one last try.

After watching his wife score a 218 on Barb Olena, Merrill looked to post a big score. Merrill cut cows that would challenge Santana, the last a chargy Brahman-cross that caused the gelding

to dig deep. When the dust settled, their 220.5 lasted through 13 more runs for the amateur cutting world championship.

Royal Santana went on to place three more times in youth high-point cutting competition and once more in amateur cutting. In his lifetime, he won more than \$171,500 and spawned a legion of memories.

Royal Santana died in 1995, and was buried next to the arena named in his honor at Merrill's Windward Stud. He was inducted into the American Quarter Horse Hall of Fame in 2000.



**INDUCTED INTO THE AMERICAN QUARTER HORSE**

*Hall of  
Fame*

**2000**