

MRS. FISHER E. SIMMONS

Her name on the Hall of Fame plaque reads “Mrs. Fisher E. Simmons,” but deep in the heart of Cajun country, she simply went by the name “Miss Polly.”

It was the only name she needed on Avery Island, Louisiana, a subtropical paradise teeming with wildlife and strung with vines and swags of Spanish moss.

Simmons' experiences with horses are not those typically associated with the familiar cowboys on Quarter Horses. She told stories of herding Brahman cattle through thickly vegetated brush and getting bucked off green horses that did not think too highly of wading through the rear-whacking bamboo stalks.

It was her youngest son, Bill, that really got her hooked on Quarter Horses. As captain of the polo team at Culver Military Institute, Bill was always on the lookout for good polo ponies. Miss Polly bought a roan stallion, Blue Mills by Bunky Phillips, and was a regular Quarter Horse fan from that day forward.

The hearts in Simmons' horses proved tremendous on the racetrack. As her involvement with the sprinters grew, Simmons became known in racing circles throughout Louisiana and the South. She was instrumental in the formative stages of Evangeline Downs racetrack in Lafayette, and devoted so much of her energy to racing at Delta Downs in Vinton that a room and a race—The “Miss Polly Handicap”—was named in her honor.

In 1968, Simmons became the fifth woman director of AQHA, and she was given the title of AQHA Honorary Vice President in 1977. She also served on the public information committee.

Simmons died in 1980. She was inducted into the American Quarter Horse Hall of Fame in 1995.

