

MERLE WOOD

Merle Wood once said, “When I was still a boy, I made a commitment to myself: When I grew up, if I was ever in a position to give back to young Americans what people had given to me, I would do it.” And he did just that.



One of Wood's main benefactors was the American Junior Quarter Horse Association (today known as the American Quarter Horse Youth Association). He served on the AQHA Youth Committee, sponsored classes at the AQHA Youth Championship World Show and also lent his name to the Team Spirit challenge at the AQHA World Championship Show. He was also founding chairman of the AQHA Scholarship Fundraising Committee and served as past chairman of the AQHA Youth Activities Committee.

Helping kids did not end with the Quarter Horse industry. Wood was a huge supporter of the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association Exceptional Rodeo program, which matches

handicapped kids together with professional cowboys for a mock rodeo.

Wood and his wife Ellen were active in the Quarter Horse industry for more than 30 years. While living in Virginia, their children became involved with horses and began showing. Wood served as president of the Virginia Quarter Horse Association. During this time, he had as many as 22 broodmares.

In 1972, the Wood family moved to Kansas, where Merle became director of government affairs for Marion Laboratories in Kansas City. He continued his involvement in the Quarter Horse industry. Wood was a past president for the Northeast Kansas Quarter Horse Association.

Wood got his judge's card for both AQHA and the National Cutting Horse Association, and served as an AQHA Director from Kansas for more than 20 years. When the Association celebrated its 50th anniversary at the 1990 Convention, he was named an AQHA Honorary Vice President.

In 1997, the first Merle Wood Humanitarian Award was given to acknowledge the person who best follows Wood's example of charity. The first recipient was Mary Hopkins of Vicksburg, Mississippi.

Wood died in 1996. He was inducted into the American Quarter Horse Hall of Fame in 1998.

INDUCTED INTO THE AMERICAN QUARTER HORSE

*Hall of
Fame*

1998