

DALE WILKINSON

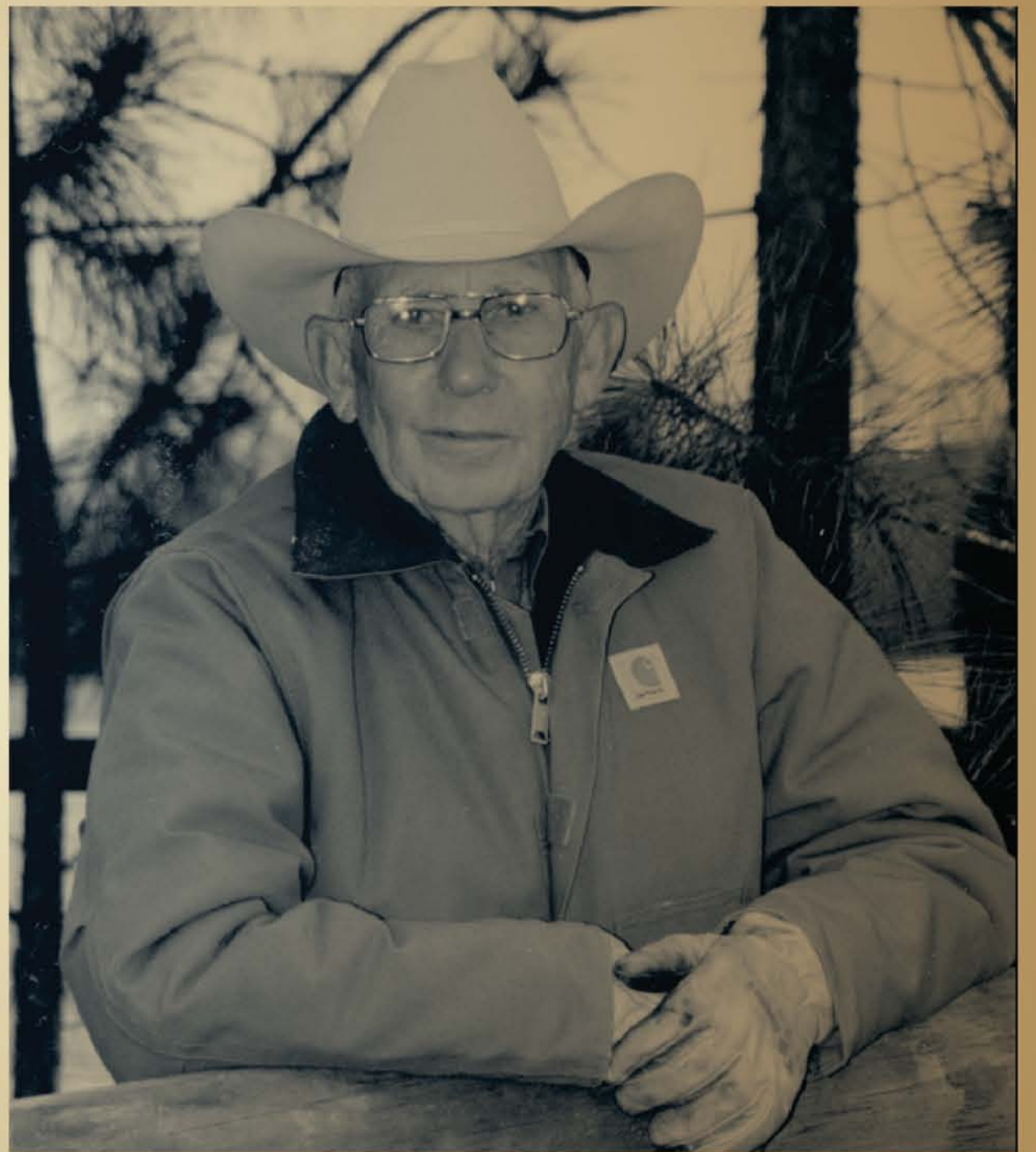
“God created Dale, and Dale created reining,” said veteran trainer Dick Pieper of Dale Wilkinson. Much of the credit for reining’s success and its modern manifestation has gone to the self-taught horse trainer from Waynesboro, Georgia.

Wilkinson is the only person to win both the National Cutting Horse Association and National Reining Horse Association futurities. He won the first NRHA Futurity in 1966 aboard AQHA Champion Pocorochi Bo, a double-bred King gelding, and again in 1975 with Clene Continental, a gelding by Continental King and out of a Bert granddaughter. Wilkinson won the 1972 cutting futurity riding Gun Smoke’s Dream by Mr Gun Smoke.

But it was not only winning; it was the way he won. His horses were more fluid and softer, performing with loose reins and flowing maneuvers. They stopped hard, but not as deep as the West Coast horses did in the 1960s. Wilkinson’s method of skating the horse across the top of the ground brought the loudest cheers. In cutting, his horses could get deep and sway ends with the best.

Wilkinson credits the development of his training skills to a stallion named Rondo’s King, by Saltillo out of Brownie Hargrove by King P-234.

Wilkinson trained Mr Gun Smoke on his Ohio farm. When he realized how much talent the horse had, Wilkinson traded \$2,500, a trophy and a Mr Gun Smoke filly for the sorrel stallion. Mr Gun Smoke was a superior athlete and was even more successful as a sire. “Gun Smokes” have successfully competed in reining, cutting and reined cow horse events.



In 1975, Wilkinson offered his farm to Findlay College as a training center for students. He never was part of the staff, but he spent many hours teaching the horse-trainers-to-be. He sold the farm to the college in 1984 and moved to Georgia to escape the snow and cold of Ohio. The place is now the centerpiece for the college’s equine training program.

Wilkinson was inducted into the American Quarter Horse Hall of Fame in 2000.

INDUCTED INTO THE AMERICAN QUARTER HORSE

*Hall of
Fame*

2000