

ELMER HEPLER

Born near Carlsbad, New Mexico, Elmer Hepler and his brothers entered the horse business at early ages and never looked back.



Hepler was 11 when he and his brothers bought their first horse. A mare by Traveler was the beginning of the brothers' breeding program. Through her descendants, Hepler got his first foundation sire, Little Joe The Wrangler, by Joe Hancock.

The New Mexico rancher raised horses for years before AQHA was founded, and Hepler was at the Blackstone Hotel in Fort Worth, Texas, when the Association was formed. Through the

years, Hepler was an AQHA Director and an Honorary Vice President. He also owned Shue Fly the World Champion Running Horse for three of the first four years of Quarter Horse-sanctioned races.

Riding bulls and broncs professionally for Tex Austin's rodeo distracted Hepler for a time. However, around 1935, Hepler retired from the rodeo business and went back to raising horses. Hepler and his brother, Charley, were racing Little Joe The Wrangler and had acquired Joe Tom, by Joe Hancock, and Lucky Joe, by Lucky Strike.

The best-known horse the Heplers owned was Shue Fly, whom they purchased in 1942 after she had defeated Clabber, Joe Tom and Nobodies Friend. They paid \$3,000 for the mare, and Shue Fly did not disappoint them. The sorrel mare was named the World Champion Quarter Running Horse for 1941-42, 1942-43 and 1943-44.

Another winner for Hepler was Johnny Dial, a stallion who was named the World Champion Quarter Running Horse in 1952 and earned \$23,000 at a time when purses were notoriously low.

Hepler died in 1978, and was inducted into the American Quarter Horse Hall of Fame in 1991.

INDUCTED INTO THE AMERICAN QUARTER HORSE

*Hall of
Fame*

1991