

GERALD O'CONNOR

Gerald "Jerry" O'Connor was the first physician to be elected AQHA President when he took office at the 1987 convention.

He was an orthopedic surgeon and the Medical Director of the University of Michigan Sports Medicine Center.

O'Connor was born and raised on a stock farm in South Dakota. He grew up during the height of the Depression when horses were an expensive luxury.

"But I always wanted a horse," O'Connor said in a 1987 interview. "I think what really stimulated my interest in horses was a teacher I had in about the fourth grade. She really inspired me to read, and one of the first books she gave me to read was a horse book called 'Smokey,' by Will James."



In 1962, O'Connor bought and moved his family to the Wendloch Farm in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and began raising Quarter Horses. The foundation of his program were mares Nifty Fiddle, O'Connor's first AQHA Champion, and M's Lulu. In 1965 he bought Custus Jaguar, a son of Jaguar out of a Leo mare, for his foundation stallion. To cross on the Custus Jaguar daughters, O'Connor bought Hi Yaller Showbars, a palomino from the Skipper W line.

One of O'Connor's daughters showed Wendloch Belle, a horse her father bred, to the 1975 youth world champion in yearling mares. Another horse he bred, Jag's Nifty Doll, won the western pleasure futurity at the 1971 All American Quarter Horse Congress.

O'Connor became an AQHA Director in 1974 and took a seat on the AQHA Executive Committee in 1983. He also served on the finance and judges committees. O'Connor was a two-term president of the Michigan Quarter Horse Association and a founding member of the Michigan Horse Council, as well as the first president.

O'Connor died in May 2004, and was inducted into the American Quarter Horse Hall of Fame in 1998.

INDUCTED INTO THE AMERICAN QUARTER HORSE

*Hall of
Fame*

1998