

IKE HAMILTON

Ike Hamilton of West Monroe, Louisiana, was the most revered auctioneer in the Quarter Horse industry. His success was not due to a smooth baritone voice or hypnotic chant. He was more admired for his wit, humor and attention to customer service.



A rodeo trick rider, Hamilton was involved in a severe accident that broke his leg in five places when he was 25 years old. Clifford Benson, an auctioneer and close friend, began teaching Hamilton the business of auctioneering. Benson took him along to all the sales. Hamilton started out small by selling Eskimo Pies and was soon selling a white mule. When Benson retired, Hamilton took over his sales. He was selling everything from rain coats to war bonds to Quarter Horses.

With the help of friends Dave Perkins, Lee Berwick and Charlie Webb, Hamilton sold Quarter Horses at the first Quarter Horse sake ever held in Louisiana, the Louisiana State University Stock Show sale in 1954.

“When a horse would come into the ring,” Hamilton said, “ol’ Dave Perkins would whisper to me, ‘Now, that’s a grandson of King P-234.’”

And I’d say, ‘Hey, by golly, we got a grandson of P-234.’ Ol’ Lee Berwick would say to me real quiet-like, ‘Got an awfully nice head and neck, good muscle.’ I’d say, ‘Got a head on him like it oughta be, and a good muscle on him.’ ... When I got through there, the folks thought I knew more about Quarter Horses than anybody.”

After that, Hamilton’s career as a purebred auctioneer blossomed. Soon, top Quarter Horse breeders, including B.F. Phillips, Edgar Brown III, Hank Wiescamp, A.O. Phillips, Rex Cauble, Helen Groves and John Riker, asked him to sell their horses. These sells gave Hamilton the opportunity to sell some of the best horse in the business: Go Josie Go, Poco Lena, Doc Hickory, Steel Target and Jose Uno.

AQHA and its Foundation profited greatly from Hamilton’s abilities as an auctioneer and his charitable demeanor. Hamilton sold the first AQHF benefit auction, and had a part in every other one until 1995. He was selected as an AQHA Honorary Vice President in 1992, and served on the AQHA scholarship fundraising committee from 1992-94 and AQHA hall of fame selection committee from 1995-97.

Hamilton died May 1, 1997, and was inducted into the American Quarter Horse Hall of Fame in 1999.

INDUCTED INTO THE AMERICAN QUARTER HORSE

*Hall of
Fame*

1999