

# RICHARD M. KLEBERG, JR.

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*“I doubt that there is, or ever has been, another place on earth just like the King Ranch of Texas. I also doubt that there is, or ever has been, another family and another people like the family and people of the King Ranch, the Kineños (King Ranch people).”*

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Holland McCombs used these words in his introduction to “The King Ranch, 1939-1944.” The statement accurately described the Kleberg family and one of its descendants, Richard M. Kleberg, Jr.

Kleberg was born in 1916, and was a grandson of R. J. Kleberg, Sr., one of the King Ranch pioneers. Kleberg’s early education was spent with the Spanish-speaking cowboys who populated the numerous cow camps of the King Ranch empire. His father managed the Laureles division of the ranch, and when Kleberg was old enough to work cattle – following the tradition of Kleberg youth – he did so from dawn to dusk, day in and day out.

His family moved to Corpus Christi, Texas, where Kleberg received his junior and high school

education. His father was elected to Congress and the family moved to Washington, D.C., and Kleberg attended the Virginia Military Institute.

Kleberg returned to Texas and attended the University of Texas in Austin, and graduated from the UT law school. His next move was back to the King Ranch in Kingsville in 1940, where he became managerial assistant to his uncle, Robert J. Kleberg, Jr.

In 1954, Kleberg was elected vice president of the King Ranch corporate board, and 14 years later, he became chairman. Following family tradition, Kleberg further developed the ranch’s outstanding Quarter Horse breeding program.

Also in 1954, Kleberg became an AQHA Director, and served in this post until 1973. When he was named an AQHA Honorary Vice President. Kleberg served on the finance committee in 1972, and voiced his ideas in equine research committee meetings from 1960 through 1971.

Until his death, Kleberg was a driving force in the success of the King Ranch Quarter Horse breeding program.

Kleberg died in 1979 at 62, and was inducted into the American Quarter Horse Hall of Fame in 1995.

**INDUCTED INTO THE AMERICAN QUARTER HORSE**

*Hall of  
Fame*

**1995**