

# ROBERT J. KLEBERG, JR.

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*When a young Robert J. Kleberg Jr. took command of the famous King Ranch in 1919, his first piece of business was to begin upgrading its cattle and horses.*

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The decision to use quarter-type horses for ranch work sent through the breed ripples that are still felt today.

Twenty years later, Kleberg was invited to discuss the organization of a Quarter Horse registry. Kleberg was elected a director during the meeting. He was also named an Honorary Vice President of the Association.

Kleberg's goal was to produce a superior cow horse. He bred Quarter Horse and Thoroughbred mares to Old Sorrel, and then bred the resulting fillies back to the stallion. The foals were decent, but not exceptional. The magic cross was breeding sons of Old Sorrel – Stolis, Macanudo and Hired Hand – to their half sisters.

During the 1941 Southwestern Exposition and Fat Stock Show, King Ranch-bred Wimpy stood Grand Champion Stallion. Along with the title, Wimpy was given the honor of being P-1 in the AQHA studbook. Wimpy was both a maternal and paternal grandson of Old Sorrel, who Kleberg purchased as a colt from George Clegg in 1916.

Under Kleberg's guidance, the ranch introduced Santa Gertrudis cattle to the world in the 1920s. The United States Department of Agriculture recognized it as the first distinct

American breed of cattle in 1940.

A descendant of a pioneer Texas family, Kleberg was born March 29, 1896, in Corpus Christi, Texas. After a whirlwind courtship of 17 days, Kleberg married Helen Campbell, daughter of U.S. Rep. Phillip Campbell.

Kleberg died in 1974 at 78. He was inducted into the American Quarter Horse Hall of Fame in 1986.



**INDUCTED INTO THE AMERICAN QUARTER HORSE**

*Hall of  
Fame*

**1986**