

## American Quarter Horse Foundation

# MERLE WOOD HUMANITARIAN AWARD



### OUR PURPOSE

To recognize individuals who have made outstanding meritorious contributions of local, state, national or international significance to the development, promotion, improvement and/or progress of charitable programs designed to benefit others. Established in 1997 in honor of the late Merle Wood, this award is designed to recognize individuals who have demonstrated the same humanitarian concerns exemplified by Mr. Wood.

### WOOD'S LEGACY

Merle Edward Wood was born in Valets, Kansas in 1920 and grew up knowing about hard work and the compassion of others when you need a helping hand. As a young man Mr. Wood enlisted in the U.S. Navy Combat Corpsman and served as a medic in Guadalcanal and Okinawa with the U.S. Marine Corps during World War II and the Korean Conflict. While in the service, Merle was later stationed in Washington D.C. where he attended college part-time and received his medical administration degree. In time, he was put in charge of all medical support personnel at the White House and Camp David. This allowed him to work very closely with members of Congress, the presidential staff, as well as the President. He retired from the service, after 24 years, as a senior chief hospital corpsman responsible for distribution and training at the Bureau of Naval Personnel.

Mr. Wood joined the Missouri based Marion Laboratories in 1972 as director of government affairs and later served on the Marion Laboratories Board of Directors before retiring in 1989. That year Merle was appointed vice president of government and consumer affairs for the Kansas City Royals Baseball Club. When looking back at his career, Mr. Wood once remarked that "I've worked at about everything to make an honest dollar," which included a licensed professional boxing and wrestling referee, with the help and support of heavyweight boxing champion and close friend Joe Lewis.

Throughout the years, Mr. Wood also held various offices through his activities with the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Fleet Reserve Association, American Legion, National Rainbow Coalition Inc., Association of Military Surgeons and the Andrew G. Morrow Society of Cardiovascular Surgeons. Merle was the first recipient of the Military Society of Anesthesiology, Legion of Merit and Lifetime Membership Award.

One of Wood's greatest passions was the American Quarter Horse. He, wife Ellen, and their six children were involved in the Quarter Horse industry for over 30 years. In that time, he served as president of the Virginia Quarter Horse Association and director of the Northeast Kansas Quarter Horse Association. Mr. Wood also served as an AQHA director and honorary vice president. He once said, "I'm going to try and give back some of the things that have been given to me." This philosophy allowed him, as chairman of the AQHA Youth Activities Committee, to earnestly support our youth members. In 1975, Merle was charged with the development and

fundraising responsibilities for a newly approved concept, which would provide scholarship assistance for youth members of the American Quarter Horse Association. His zealous determination ultimately led to the conception of the American Quarter Horse Foundation and its' very first program.

"... A preeminent horseman and champion of the American Quarter Horse... His dedication to the American Quarter Horse exceeded his personal involvement with the breed and its promotion. Just as he encouraged love of this great horse within his own family, he took immense pride in the young men and women who loved American Quarter Horses as he did. Merle never supported anything he believed in with less than his full commitment. He channeled himself, his energies and resources fully, living life and supporting his causes at a full gallop."

"He opened doors and encouraged young people, culminating in his chairmanship of the AQHA committee, which established the American Junior Quarter Horse Association scholarship. He led by example and left a legacy of personal excellence. While he stood tall, it was never his intention to overshadow anyone, but rather to break trail for others to follow."

*Chris Gill, Foundation Committee Member and former AQHYA President*

The late Mr. Wood best demonstrated humanitarian characteristics through his love of family and the American Quarter Horse. He distinguished himself both in the industry and his community as an impressive businessman and civic leader.

## **CRITERIA**

The Merle Wood Humanitarian Award will be presented to an individual whose outstanding voluntary service has been marked by actions or deeds that have enabled individuals to experience positive opportunities and activities related to American Quarter Horse involvement.

Nominees should distinguish himself or herself through humanitarian endeavors in the American Quarter Horse industry. The Merle Wood Humanitarian Award is not designed to honor individuals posthumously. Awards or achievements received through industry show and/or racing competition(s) are not a factor in the selection process.

## **APPLICATION PROCEDURE**

Anyone may nominate, but the nominee is required to be a current member, in good standing with the American Quarter Horse Association. **Nomination deadline is April 1.** Approved nominations will receive an application packet for completion. **Application deadline is May 1.** Nominators must prepare an application developed for the nominee, which should include:

### **Completed Application Form**

Include on the ***application (required)*** any details you may know regarding the nominee's personal information.

- Nominee's family, occupation and AQHA activities.

### **Outstanding Accomplishments of the Nominee**

Include a minimum ***two-page narrative (required)*** detailing the nominee's outstanding accomplishments.

- Meritorious contributions and achievements of the nominee that have significance to the development, promotion, improvement and/or progress of charitable programs designed to benefit others.
- Pertinent information that will clearly indicate the nominee's contributions beyond his or her compensated job assignments and duties.
- List information in order of significance.

### **Support Information**

Include the following **supplementary materials (required)** to enhance the nominee's award application.

- Section A – List of recognition received from colleagues for humanitarian contributions to the American Quarter Horse industry.
- Section B – List of significant charitable assistance of local, state, national and/or international importance to the American Quarter Horse industry.
- Section C – List of outstanding volunteer community service performed.
- Section D – Published works about the nominee through newspaper articles, feature stories, press releases, etc.

### **Letters of Support**

Include a minimum of **three reference letters (required)**. Letters should be at least one-page in length.

- Suggested endorsers should include individuals with first-hand knowledge regarding the contributions or achievements of the nominee and their involvement in humanitarian endeavors.
- Should be person(s) other than a relative who are familiar with the nominee's accomplishments.

Achievements and/or awards should be dated and listed in chronological order with the most recent submitted first. All materials should be word processed or typewritten. All materials should be submitted at the same time as a complete package. Supplementary materials are encouraged. Faxed applications will not be eligible for consideration. Questions or inquiries may be directed to the Foundation at (806) 378-5040 or [foundation@aqha.org](mailto:foundation@aqha.org).

**Return completed applications to:**

**American Quarter Horse Foundation  
Merle Wood Humanitarian Award  
2601 East I-40  
Amarillo, TX 79104**

### **AWARD PRESENTATION**

Notification will be sent to nominators, nominees and recipient beginning in August. Each year, the Merle Wood Humanitarian Award is presented during the AQHA Convention. The recipient's humanitarian achievements are highlighted in a video presentation during the induction banquet.

The recipient is presented with a commemorative bronze bust of an American Quarter Horse, designed and donated by Marrita McMillian of Gainesville, Texas. The bust immortalizes the American Quarter Horse and the humanitarian achievements of Merle Wood.

# MERLE WOOD HUMANITARIAN AWARD APPLICATION

*Please type or print in black or blue ink:*

Nominee's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Work: \_\_\_\_\_

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Please provide information on nominee's personal life, family, education, occupation and activities.

Spouse: \_\_\_\_\_

Children: \_\_\_\_\_

Education/Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

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American Quarter Horse industry activities: \_\_\_\_\_

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AQHA/AQHF Programs or projects supported: \_\_\_\_\_

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