BREEDING A LEGACY
75 YEARS OF AMERICAN QUARTER HORSES

Sixteen ranches have bred American Quarter Horses every year of the AQHA's 75-year existence.

By Becky Newell

The ranches that represent 75 years of breeding American Quarter Horses were established by young men looking to strike out on their own, middle-aged men who found land that held promise, successful businessmen looking for an investment or families looking to make new lives in the West.

Woven into their history are the names of the men and horses who are considered the foundation of the breed and the Association. These 16 ranches, Alice Moore, Benny Binion Estate, Bonham, Burnett, Haythorn Land and Cattle Co., J A, King, Leroy Spires Jr. Estate, Norell, Pete Reynolds Estate, Pitchfork, R.A. Brown, Scharbauer Cattle Co., Shoemaker/Eddleman, Tequesquite, and the Waggoner, became part of that history. Back then, however, the people were simply neighbors; and the stallions were merely good horses with good conformation that were nearby and available for breeding.

What these ranchers didn’t know then was that some of them would go on to become the “founding fathers” of AQHA; some would eventually serve as AQHA president – Albert Mitchell, whose family started the Tequesquite Ranch in New Mexico, served an astounding four terms, guiding the Association through some really turbulent times. Some of these ranches went on to receive the AQHA Best Remuda Award for raising quality ranch-bred Quarter Horses, and some of those horses would become the very foundation bloodlines that the breed is built upon.

Visit Amarillo to see “Breeding A Legacy: 75 Years of American Quarter Horses” at the American Quarter Horse Hall of Fame & Museum honoring and showcasing the ranches' full stories along with artifacts, photos and kids’ activities. The exhibit is open now through July 25.

This exhibit is funded in part by Dr. Kent Roberts and Ilene Roberts Balliett Foundation. Additional funding is from Haythorn Land & Cattle Co., Waggoner Ranch and the E. Paul and Helen Buck Waggoner Foundation. Learn more at aqha.com/museum.
Hello Everyone,

Convention 2015 toasted 75 years of devotion to our beloved Quarter Horse in grand style! For starters, AQHA threw one heck of a celebration captivating members with an equestrian event beyond compare. Truly all the membership of AQHA rose to the occasion with tremendous enthusiasm and generosity. I raise my glass to the many individuals who worked tirelessly to make this a reality! Additionally, my thanks to all who took advantage of the opportunity to attend and have their voices heard.

On behalf of the American Quarter Horse Foundation’s Council, it is my sincere pleasure to thank all of the AQHF staff, the Foundation Ambassadors and all attendees for making the 75th Anniversary Benefit Luncheon a record setter. Not only were we blessed with a sellout crowd, but the luncheon address by Amberley Snyder rocked everyone’s world! With the help of so many continuously generous individuals, the Foundation raised over $300,000. It is awe-inspiring to comprehend such passionate giving.

This year inducted an incredible cast of new Hall of Fame members beginning with Azure Te (TB), Corona Chick, Coy’s Bonanza, Plaudit and Smart Little Lena. A distinguished group of men completed the list: Thomas Bradbury, Jim Helzer, Stanley Johnston and Ted Wells Jr. Congratulations are in order to all inductees and their families.

It is my honor to introduce and welcome Ruth Dismuke-Blakely, the new American Quarter Horse Foundation Council chairman. Ruth is beyond qualified, having made tremendous strides as a Council member affecting nationwide progress in the realm of equine-assisted activities and therapy (EAAT).

It is time for me to step aside and say thank you for allowing me to serve the past five years in the interest of the Foundation and for the benefit of our incredible horse.

Kate Johnson
American Quarter Horse Council Chairman

Johnny Trotter, Claude Choate, Suzette Bizzarro, Anna Cassidy, Kate Johnson, Wyetta Hammer, Gunnar Otness and Mary Bess Woodruff

From left to right: Johnny Trotter, Frank Merrill, Danielle Scott Merrill, Kyle Converse and Holly Merrill

Pat Hunt receives the Merle Wood Humanitarian Award from Johnny Trotter.

Christine and Ben Hudson purchased the 75th Anniversary saddle.

Luncheon Speaker - Amberley Snyder

Jana Trotter and Dr. Glenn Blodgett with the 75th Anniversary rifle
“It has been interesting being the first woman president of the Association, for a lot of reasons,” Hyland said in an interview in 1997. “It is a tremendous honor and privilege, which I don’t take lightly. But everyone has treated me as an equal. I’ve never felt that I was being excluded or treated any differently.”

Hyland’s credibility was established through almost 30 years as a leading breeder of racing American Quarter Horses and as a leader in the American Quarter Horse Association.

Her family owned, raised and raced American Quarter Horse sprinters, including champions Florentine, Calyx and Dashingly, who earned more than $5 million.

During her tenure on the Executive Committee, Hyland concentrated on developing new opportunities for all members of AQHA. She helped develop and put into effect the Ride Program, which started in 1997. She also campaigned for additional money for equine research and therapeutic medication rules.

“Serving on the Executive Committee is tough,” Hyland said. “People don’t realize what a big job it is and how much time it takes and how much responsibility there is to it.”

Perhaps Rob Brown, who was AQHA president during Ginger’s third year on the executive committee, summed up her service best, “Ginger, you’re not one of the guys; you’re one of the team.”

Ginger Hyland was inducted into the American Quarter Horse Hall of Fame in 2005. Learn more at www.aqha.com/museum.

The American Quarter Horse Foundation encourages the submission of grant applications by organizations offering equine-assisted activities and therapies (EAAT) serving those with emotional, physical and cognitive limitations. Organizations may apply on behalf of their instructors, therapists, employees and volunteers for grant funding through the America’s Horse Cares program for continued education and certification training. Funding is awarded for the completion of educational clinics and workshops approved by EAAT industry associations. The Foundation’s goal is to support the educational training of professionals within the EAAT industry.

Nature’s Edge Therapy Center in Rice Lake, Wisconsin is a non-profit organization dedicated to achieving a higher quality of life for children and adults with therapeutic needs through safe interaction with animals and nature. The Center provides intensive, family-oriented occupational, physical and speech therapies to patients of all ages through a year-round outpatient clinic. All therapies focus on discovering and developing patient abilities.

Laura Dietsche, Registered Occupational Therapist at Nature’s Edge, wrote, “Thank you for giving me this opportunity! I received hands-on education that I utilize every day at Nature’s Edge.”
As an AQHA Director and AQHF Ambassador, Laurel Walker-Denton of Skull Valley, Arizona encourages parents to get their children involved with AQHA because of the positive impact she believes the American Quarter Horse has on children.

“The American Quarter Horse can teach responsibility, love and true success,” says Laurel. “The Association and Foundation have unsurpassed youth programs that every parent should get their children involved in.”

Her experience serving on the AQHYA executive committee as a youth led her to say, “Those programs were wonderful. But everyone should know that youth programs available today are one-hundred fold better than in my day.”

All AQHF programs are important to her. “It is difficult to choose a favorite because they are all so worthwhile.” However, America’s Horse Cares and scholarships hold a special place in Laurel’s heart. She is proud of Arizona’s work to raise over $60,000 for America’s Horse Cares and notes scholarships ensure a well-educated bright future for our entire industry.

Prior to her youth involvement and becoming an AQHA Director, Laurel was raised on a ranch. “…my life, my husband and the ranch are all devoted to the Quarter Horse. So you can say the horse was the first and lasting influence of my life.” Laurel encourages volunteering for the Foundation because a horse can be “life altering... get involved; it will give you something bigger than an iPhone to worry about!”

Contact the Foundation at 806-378-5029 to become a volunteer today.

Don’t Miss Our E-Newsletter!

Sign up to receive the Foundation’s e-news or update your e-mail address to make sure you don’t miss an issue. Contact the Foundation at foundation@aqha.org or 806-378-5029 to stay up to date today!
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