

Karen Knaak 2019

Karen grew up on her family's farm in Southeast Iowa, near Ottumwa. Her neighbor raised Shetland Ponies, and that was her first experience with ponies. She would go up and ride as often as she could, so her parents then bought Karen her first pony. He was stubborn and didn't like to move, so she would take a stick and tie an ear of corn at the end and hold it out in front of him to get him to move. Her parents said if she made the Honor Roll they would buy her a horse. They bought a grade mare that she learned to ride. Her next horse was a registered Quarter Horse mare. They did not know she was in foal at the time she was purchased. Karen got a surprise colt, KoKoNo Joe. She went on numerous trail rides with him and even showed him at a few small shows.

Karen attended a Farrier Class at Indian Hills Community College and met Marie Bolibaugh. Marie introduced Karen to the American Saddlebred, and that is when she fell in love with the American Saddlebred breed. Karen purchased Grampa's Girl from Marie and raised two colts "CH G.S.L's I'M A PEPPER" and "CAPTURE MY HEART".

"Pepper" was shown in the Iowa Futurity by Mark and Renae Van Zomeran. He later went on to be teamed up with Kent Swalla at the Linda Lust Stables. Kent and "Pepper" were very successful in showing in equitation and show pleasure winning at the National Pleasure Horse Show, Des Moines State Fair, Missouri State Fair, many other numerous shows, and the American Royal. "Pepper" also carried other riders to many wins under saddle and in the driving classes as well.

Karen was employed at McCune and Reed Insurance for 44 years before retiring in 2012. She was instrumental in securing the insurance coverage for the SIERA Horse Shows. She has been a member of the SIERA Horse Club for many years having served as Co-chairman of the show, on the Board of Directors and currently is the Treasurer and Membership Chairman.

Karen is a member of the IASA and the IHSA. She has served on the IASA Board of Director's. She along with her good friend, Sandy Swalla, received the 2015 IHSA Sportsmanship Award of which she is very proud of.

Karen currently, along with Sandy, handle the ribbons and out gate for the Great River and the Fall Classic Shows. She always enjoys seeing everyone at the shows and likes to share a laugh or two. Karen would like to thank the Horsemen's Hall of Fame for this honor and wishes to thank her family, and friends, for their support throughout the years.