

2003

I would like to thank the Iowa State Fair Horseman's Hall of Fame for the honor of being inducted into such a prestigious group of Horsemen. I am proud to be included with some of the best horsemen in the country. Thank You!

My love for horses started at the early age of 5. My Grandfather purchased a Shetland Pony mare with a spotted colt at her side. The mare was my brother's and the colt, who I named Cocoa, was mine. That meant that I would need to wait 2 full years to ride him for the first time. By then, we had met and become friends of Tom Conway from Mallard, Iowa who introduced us to the Hackney Pony and American Saddlebred Horses. Our family started attending, what I labeled Saturday Night horse shows, which abounded around Iowa.

We were soon introduced to trainer Max James of Creston, Iowa who had a customer horse for sale. An English Pony by the name of Lucifer's Fantasy. Because I was too young to show a pony of this caliber, a rider was needed. That person turned out to be Jimmy Miller of the Jimmy Miller Stables of Wentzville, Mo. Even though my parents felt I was too young to show, that did not stop me from becoming an eager student of horsemanship.

Eventually Cocoa was sold so I could graduate to a horse. This purchase was a broken-down Quarter Horse by the name of Sunshine. Sunshine had to do everything that a Quarter Horse does not do. I think everyone here knows you can't make a Quarter Horse do what an American Saddlebred can, but I sure did try!

Finally at the age of 15 my family decided I could have a show horse. We were told that Judy Jensen and Keith Bartz in the Minneapolis area were selling a Three Gaited Amateur gelding by the name of "Flakes Of Fire." It was love at first sight. Now I had to learn how to ride a show horse. I was introduced to Dick Wallen and family of Sioux City, Iowa. Dick was famous for teaching equitation and had students coming from all over the country for lessons. This was the beginning of a lasting relationship that has spanned 41 years. Dick's sons are now breaking and starting my young colts

In 1966, after graduating from High School, I went to work for Wallen Stables. I learned a lot about horse training and handling from the Wallens. While there I helped train a colt I raised. Her name was "Mystic Miss." Dick showed her as a two-year-old fine harness horse and eventually she would become my first and most memorable Pleasure Horse.

In 1969 "Missy" and I met Gary DeBoom of Algona, Ia. Gary, of course, had to become interested in horse shows. Gary pitched in and helped me campaign Missy for two seasons showing every weekend at every

**Saturday night show on the circuit. We got Reserve High Point Champion two years in a row. In 1971 we entered her in the Minnesota State Fair Horse Show. At that time, Minnesota hosted the National Pleasure Driving Championship. One of the lessons in life that I learned from Dick Wallen was to "pay attention to detail." That lesson certainly paid off that night in Minneapolis. We won Reserve National Championship Honors.**

**There has been many more horses and influential people in my life since then. Eventually my son, Ryan and daughter Jennifer were born and my horse showing had to be put on hold. My mother, Dorothy Abbott, and I settled back and started raising an occasional colt. We became interested in the American Saddlebred Futurity of Iowa. Around 1966, Max James showed our first entry in the Futurity, a Three-Year-Old Five Gaited Colt. Since then we have shown many colts and supported the Futurity. My mother and I became directors of the Futurity and in 1990, jointly shared the Secretary/Treasury duties until her death a few years ago. I have continued with these duties to this day. We were both actively involved in initiating the beginning of the Breeders Stake program that you witnessed earlier this evening. With the encouragement and help from Dr. Jay and Nita Firth of Ankeny, Iowa, I bred a mare that produced the winner of the 2000 Breeders Stake who was shown by Monty Wallen and Nita.**

**I have also served as a 4-H Leader, Superintendent for the Kossuth County Fair 4-H Horse Show, breeding and showing of dogs, and helped our children raise and show cattle from our Cow-Calf Herd. In 1991 Gary and I purchased a pair of Llamas and have built a reputable show and breeding stock Llama Herd.**

**We are currently leaders of the Kossuth County Llama Club. I will be going home after the show this evening and will return back to the State Fair for the Llama Show starting on Saturday.**

**The Iowa State Fair has been a part of my life since 1954. I have only missed one State Fair in 49 years due to the fear of the Polio epidemic.**

**I have been fortunate to meet and become friends with many people in my life who have supported, advised, and encouraged me in this sport that I truly cherish. I will join many of these people in the Hall of Fame. With Gods blessing, I hope to continue my attendance at the State Fair and my participation in such a wonderful annual horse show.**

**Once again, I am humbly honored to be an inductee into the Iowa State Fair Horseman Hall of Fame.**

**Jean DeBoom**