

## Victoria Ennis

ApHC Hall of Fame

She was a woman who came to horses later in life, but that didn't stop her from becoming one of the most admired Appaloosa breeders in the industry in a short span of time. That admiration earned her a rare berth in both the ApHC Hall of Fame and the ApHC Racing Hall of Fame.

Victoria had a sharp sense of marketing and knew what she wanted her horses to do. She started her Appaloosa career with the purchase of Merry Weedo, a National and World championship mare that also produced National and World champions.

Her adventures didn't end in the performance arena, however. After earning a World championship with Merry Weedo, Victoria earned a Junior Games Association title with Turquoise Splash. She developed a taste for racing, perhaps an offshoot of her love of games events.

Her first stallion, Mr Spotted Bull, was purchased in 1992. He was 19 and had been a successful race sire but faded from view. Victoria revamped his image into that of performance horse sire. She went on to purchase I Love Willie, who was the foundation at her operation, Texoma Appaloosas, for many years. I Love Willie offspring have earned \$995,858.92, with 73 starters out of his 184 registered foals; of those foals, 46 are performance point earners and 55 halter point earners.

Victoria studied bloodlines and ensured that she promoted her horses without hesitation. She had a master's degree in business and promotion, and put her knowledge to work. When she first purchased I Love Willie, she bought two trailer loads of his babies, sight unseen, and promoted them.

Victoria enjoyed watching her retired racehorses go on to excel in the performance pen, but not just as games horses. "While the natural spot for racehorses would seem to be barrels and games, I've made a good living finding that to be untrue," Victoria said in a 2008 article in *Appaloosa Journal*. "I get more delight from seeing them become jumpers or western pleasure horses."

With 84 horses on her breeding roster, the result is great horses. Texoma horses that have gone on to great careers in racing, performance and the breeding aspect include DZ Weedo, Ibelieveicanfly, Willies Neon Moon, and Cricket Bars Futurity winners Willies Blue Moon and Willies Chick, among others.

Her husband, Ronnie, is continuing the Texoma operation in Victoria's stead, and was overjoyed upon hearing that Victoria was honored with both inductions. "Being inducted into the Racing Hall of Fame and the club Hall of Fame at almost the same time I thought was really respectful of what she'd accomplished," Ronnie says.

The behind-the-scenes, supportive Ronnie stood behind Victoria in everything she did, and he holds immeasurable respect for his wife's intelligence and passion for the breed. "She was 100 percent Appaloosa," he says. "She was one of the truest people in the Appaloosa breed in just her love for that breed."

Victoria was also mother to Austin, a junior at the University of Oklahoma. Austin is playing in his third year on the OU Stars basketball team, which won the national championship his freshman year.

