

Hey Neighbor



For The Love Of Horses

By Frank J. Buchman

World-Renowned Halter Horse Showman Into Kansas Hall Of Fame For Service

For his service to horses, owners, breeders and the industry, Denny Hassett is known far and wide, and for that he has been inducted into the Kansas Quarter Horse Hall of Fame.

In a visit at his newest location southwest of Topeka, Hassett last week reviewed his recent transitions and lifetime achievements with horses.

Actually, Hassett, originally from Tonganoxie, wasn't born with horse fever in his blood and preferred participating in football, basketball and track while attending McLouth High School. "I started going to shows with a friend of mine, and my interests changed," Hassett recalled.

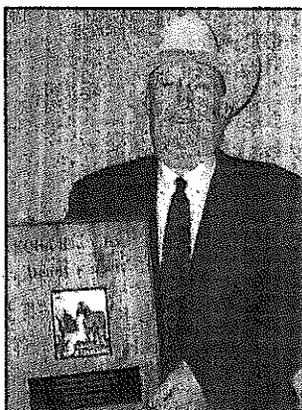
Given a gray mare by the friend's father, Hassett trained the horse and was successful in showing her in

open shows. "I then bought some horses to train and show, and before long other people asked me to train for them," Hassett reminisced.

In 1970, he left his gas service job and trained horses full time. "I rode reining and pleasure horses and also showed them at halter," Hassett said.

After marrying Dana (Sullivan) in 1972, the couple moved to southwest Kansas where Hassett showed the Western horses and his wife competed in the English division. He noted, "We were fortunate to campaign such horses as Conclusive, Impressive Dandy and six-time world champion Decker Impressive."

After an accident in the mid-'80s, Dana Hassett stopped showing in English competition, and Hassett



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soon after turned strictly to exhibiting halter horses. "I rode a horse to place eighth in junior pleasure at the World in 1989, and then we

moved back to the Wichita area, and I have limited my showing to halter horses ever since," Hassett commented.

"I've had both knee and hip surgeries, and showing is so much more specialized now than it used to be, so strictly showing halter horses works out better all of the way around," he analyzed.

In his career to date, Hassett has shown 23 world champions and nearly an equal number of reserve world champions.

He will be taking eight head of horses to the World Championship Quarter Horse Show starting this week in Oklahoma City, hoping to add to the list of winners. "We are grateful for our longtime customers," Hassett credited. "Several of the horses we'll be taking to the World this year belong to owners we've trained for 15 to 20 years."

His lineup going to the World includes three from Nebraska, two from Colorado, and one each from Oklahoma, Texas and Kansas. Five of the eight horses going to the world will be shown by amateur owners as well as by Hassett in open competition.

"I like to win with the horses, but it's even better when the owners can win

with them," added Hassett, who has also worked with champion youth exhibitors.

Among the horses Hassett has shown to a world championship is his own stallion, GQ Eclipse, who is standing for public service at Dale Carey's DC Quarter Horses, where Hassett is also presently located near Topeka.

"We actually closed our facilities near Burns in January and moved here to Dale's place last spring. We've just recently sold the barn at Burns," Hassett remarked.

Initially working out of

10 stalls at the Topeka barn, Hassett said another 10 stalls have just been completed. "My nephew Doug Coleman, who has been shoeing, training and showing horses in Oklahoma, has moved here to be part of the business.

"We will be able to expand our showing and serve our customers better," Hassett insisted. "We'll be able to take more horses to different shows on the same days and give the horses additional opportunities to accomplish their potential."

Hassett only owns has about a handful of horses



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personally or in partnerships. "Since we don't own a place now, it's difficult to have very many of our own. I sometimes buy a mare and breed her to sell," he related.

In addition to GQ Eclipse, a sire of winners and top broodmares, Hassett also owns a double bred Skipper W stallion, Skip Too Fair, likewise a proven sire.

Crediting his wife and employee for their help in success of the operation, Hassett noted that his wife, Dana, is an accomplished artist with her work in demand and on display in galleries around the area.

While his records are most recognized in the arena, Hassett is a servant behind the scenes as well. He served as a member of the board of directors of the

Kansas Quarter Horse Association for several years.

Currently, Hassett is a director of the American Quarter Horse Association. "I've served on both the show and contest committee and the judging committee," the horseman stated.

Hassett has shared his knowledge of showing horses not only through working

with amateurs, youth and in clinics, but also in a book. His acclaimed "Winning At Halter" was written with assistance from Lynda Lane, and it has been in demand by those wanting to select, fit and show halter horses.

Upon receiving his Hall of Fame recognition, Hassett acknowledged, "I've enjoyed working with the Kansas Quarter Horse Association. I tried to move out of the state a few times, and I've been from one side of the state to the other, and it looks like I'm back to where I started.

"I want to thank all of my customers, because without good horses you can't be where you want to be. I thank God and my wife for all of the help they've given me to accomplish what we have," he concluded.

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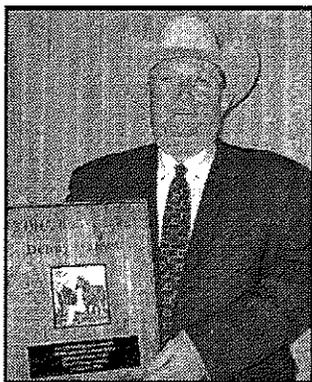
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