



## Karen Grimm ApHC Hall of Fame

In the '80s, Karen Grimm was breeding and raising Thoroughbreds. She was, in her words, "a small fish in a big pond." So it was easy for Karen, upon seeing an image of Dreamfinder, to make a transition to Appaloosas.

"I got into the breed because of one horse," Karen says. "It was Dreamfinder...I was just in love." Her farrier and friend had shown her *Appaloosa News*, which had contained a headshot of the stallion. Karen promptly had one of her Thoroughbred mares bred to him. Her Thoroughbreds were slowly phased out of her program, and Karen began developing halter horses.

As her program began to build, she found another stallion that took her breath away. "Once I went and saw Impressive Andrew," Karen says, "I was smitten. To me, that was the golden cross. Every time I sent my mares to Crown Center Farm I'd get a home run."

Three of the horses resulting from that sire—Night Vision, Night Deck and Recurring Vision—are in the Hall of Fame. And Karen's Black Horse Ranch set out to prove

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that halter horses can go on to compete in other events.

"I began sending halter horses to Jim and Sandy Jirkovsky to ride," Karen explains. Rather than trying to do it all herself, Karen found the best in the industry, sent those people good horses, and let them bring out the horse's talent.

That talent flourished in Karen's horses, resulting in numerous titles, trophies and honors, including three stallions that earned the World's Best Appaloosa title: Recurring Dream, Pleasant Dreams and Mr. Big Bucks. In addition to the World's Best title, Mr. Big Bucks also took home the Nutrena Iron Horse and champion cattle horse titles.

Having built an amazing program, Karen is scaling down her operation due to illness. At the 2009 World Show, she underwent emergency surgery and suffered numerous complica-

tions, including the revelation of cancer. She's now undergoing chemotherapy. But it was the support from Appaloosa people, some of whom she didn't even know well, that touched her heart. The Jirkovskys and many others stepped up to show her horses then help them get home.

For those horses with bright futures, Karen is secure in knowing they're now with owners who will continue the dream and prove that a halter horse can compete in so much more.

Over the years, Karen has learned how to breed for the best, and the horses have taught her what makes a champion. "If they have the willingness to give their all to you, they can overcome a lot of the physical challenges," she says. "If they've got the heart, that's worth more to me than anything. Disposition, conformation then color. There's no bad color on a good horse."

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5