



Harlan Norman

Harlan Norman had horses in his blood. “I guess he was just always horsey,” says Marge Norman, Harlan’s wife. Born in July 1926, he was raised on a farm in Imperial, Nebraska.

During the early ’50s, Harlan rode as a jockey at county fairs in Nebraska and Colorado; riding his own horses was something he continued on occasion, when the event was merited. In 1965, Harlan piloted Harold Calhoun’s Patty Hand to the winner’s circle for the World Wide Derby in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

He worked for a cutting horse trainer for nearly 10 years, before he and Marge decided to go it alone. “He preferred race-horses over show horses,” Marge says, so it was back to the track as a trainer.

Harlan became involved in the Appaloosa business through friends that owned them, among them Harold Calhoun and Tom Bradsbury. He trained notable winners such as My Host Bright, The Hooper Honker, J&B Sumthing Dear, Silver-N-Gold’s Equal, War Don’s Darling, Mr. War Jet, Hootie, Navajo Breeze and Big Buck.

“I feel he had two outstanding Appaloosas,” Marge says. “My Host Bright and Nellies Girl.” My Host Bright was bred and owned by Martin Abrahamson, and she had 50 career starts with \$26,496 in pari-mutuel earnings. She was also inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2007.

Nellies Girl was bred by Ralph Henley,



and owned in turn by Donald Peterson and Wagon Wheel Ranch Inc. Of her 26 starts, she earned 14 wins and \$44,708 in lifetime earnings.

In 1969 Harlan was the ApHC leading trainer with the most wins, and that same year, his son, Steve, was honored as the ApHC leading jockey with most wins. In 1971 Harlan was second to Lewis Warchow, as trainer with most wins; in 1979 he tied with Van Walker as trainer with most pari-mutuel wins.

“I never knew anyone that didn’t like Harlan,” Marge recalls. “He felt that Appaloosa people were good people; they were honest. I don’t know of any owners we ever had for Appaloosas that we ever had a problem with.”

Harlan and Marge also had two daughters, Roxie Ellis and Soni Reich. Harlan passed away October 15, 2000.