

MEDAL OF ESTEEM RECIPIENT JANET MILLER, 225525

Jan Miller is a devoted horseperson. Passionate about equines of all breeds but special to her is the Australian Quarter Horse. Every opportunity Jan gets she takes advantage in singing the praises of the Quarter Horse. Attracted by the attributes of the breed, especially the versatility and temperament Jan breeds Quarter Horses.



She has a select small band of mares and a stallion, Carlingford Patrons Pass. It is not only the fact that these animals are drawing attention to the Australian Quarter Horse, but the fact that Jan promotes the breed.

Following a successful career in show jumping, eventing, dressage, equestrian and saddle horse classes, Jan discovered the Australian Quarter Horse firstly at the Twilight Cutting events held

at the Victorian property of the Late Bill Davis. She was blown away by the temperament, and ability of the horses. So much so that she bred a mare to Wayward Isle*. Sadly she lost the mare with a hock fracture only seven months into the pregnancy and for a while her training



stables continued with the education of horses and riders for the equestrian and performance areas. It was years later that she was to renew her interest in not only the QH breed but the western style of riding. Virginia Buckland went to work for David Rees the owner of Goldrush Training Stables who had at the time Dave Wedlock as his manager/trainer. She started to compete at shows and Jan had to often take her. This gave her the opportunity to witness even more the versatility of the breed. Although she still continued to maintain her interest in the

training of traditional horses and riders, in no time she was 'sold' on the western scene.

Jan also enjoyed judging and has been on most breed panels as a qualified judge and was at the time also judging saddle horse and pony classes, equestrians, dressage and jumping. She decided to reach for her western judging ticket and gained her HSAA qualifications at Johnnie Guyatts indoor arena at Tynong North. Jack Cooper was a panellist at the time and one of the questions thrown at her in the interview section was – *“Could you take the pressure of judging a big money class?”* Jan laughed and answered, *“Mr Cooper I have judged, hacks and riding and you can't get any more pressure than that!”* She passed the course and in no time was out and about judging.

Another of Jan's major interest was youth. Like many she had come up through the pony club ranks and maintained a great interest in these junior riders. She holds the most senior of the

Pony Club Association of Victoria's Instructor's Certificate and taught at Box Hill, Mooroolbark, Upper Yarra, Lilydale and Macclesfield Pony Clubs. It was no surprise that she took an even greater interest in the Quarter Horse youth movement. Jan was one of the instigators of the YVQHA Youth Championships that along with the Robin Yates inspired County of Cumberland show became the most premier youth shows in the Country. The YVQHA weekend of competition also included a Junior Judging Competition. Due to her support for the youth Jan brought both worlds together by introducing a pony club program. With the support of the Board of Directors Pony Club Registers of Merit were introduced and pamphlets circulated throughout clubs. At the time Jan held the Youth portfolio and every month produced print ready the Junior Journal that included both English and western youth interests. Jan also developed other programs such as a "Week with a Trainer" and approached many professionals to tag on a day for youth when they were doing another clinic somewhere in Australia.



Her interest and dedication to the AQHA involved fund raising and involvement in the Quarter Horse Youth World Cup. In 1990 she took a team to Calgary resulting in a World Reserve Champion achievement. In that team were: Melissa Deans (Qld) and from Victoria, Dean Jones, Travis Nielsen, Andrew Soper and Julie Davidson. Sue Farrell was coach. The photo on the left was taken during a training session at the Late Loeky Young's Greenhill Training Stables) The next event was to be hosted by Australia and

in 1992 the QH people of this country were to hold one of the most successful cups ever held. Jan was the organizer. They rallied from all around Australia. Donated horses of an incredible standard were made available by amateurs, youth. Professionals and support from top studs like Winderadeen providing a competitive and quality field. The cutting guys gathered to offer great horses and to make up help crews. The Aachen event was two years later with Ross Gould as coach, and once again Jan as manager with Lani Fender, Georgina Crick, Rebecca Nixon, Christine Vandenbosch and Nerida Cole representing Australia.

In the closing years of the eighties, Jan was elected to the Board of Directors of the AQHA. She served on the Board for ten years with a three year term as President. Once on the Board Jan



Now retired from official duties, Jan Miller was out on the circuit having a great time showing. She is pictured with Oceanview Mr. Hunch Bid.

resigned from the Yarra Valley affiliate as she believed that it was important that she hold no special interests as now she was to represent the entire membership. Her Yarra Valley days had been very active with the running of the prestigious Yarra Valley Classic held in January and a part of the Victorian Southern Circuit of Shows; the Rotary Show and of course the Youth Championships. The YVQHA Improver Series was a boom to the industry and brought many new chums into the western scene. Once Jan realised that if she continued with all these interests then she would have been stretched beyond her limits and the fact that she was putting her daughter Kinnear, through college, she did not have the time to keep up with her vast load of voluntary commitments.

Gradually the western scene for Jan became much more active than the other breeds and equestrian interests but she still had a foot in each court. This meant she could keep up with the promotion of the Quarter Horse in wider circles. Campdrafting came to her notice when Jan judged the Queensland State QH Championships at Comet. To her dismay most of the drafters rode Quarter Horses but not many were registered with the AQHA. She drew this to the attention of the Board and with the strong support of Peter Bellden and Paul Lorimer the Super Series Campdraft was born and has flourished in registration, membership numbers etc. and recognition of the breed as suitable for that purpose.



During her years spent on the Board of Directors and during one of them as president, Jan was to witness the purchase of an AQHA owned office rather than a rental unstable situation. The Board at the time joined Jan at the official opening with pride in their achievement. Special guests gathered with members, including founding officials in honouring an important occasion. A Building Fund had been started many years before this day with a kick start of two of the Late Hugh Sawrey's paintings. This had been depleted with running costs, and the high financial strain of management of a growing and active association only, to have this dedicated Board with careful financial planning and budgeting, breathe new life, and funds into achieving a long term dream of security.



As well as her usual director responsibilities Jan took on many important projects that took up much of her time and energy. These voluntary

'extras' included the following:

- The putting together of the very important *AQHA Statement on Animal Welfare*. This came about after the AmQHA Convention in Seattle when Animal Rights were growing in the U.S.A. Hours of extra consultation with our solicitors and Veterinary Consultants and then with Board Approval, Jan was to see the Welfare Statement that is used to this day, come about.
- The opportunity to register eligible AmQHA on their own soil. Previous to this horses had to be taken to America to be registered. Brian Hooper had begun proceedings to have this happen and Jan at the Atlanta Convention lobbied all other international affiliates and thus finished the job.

- The introduction of the American Classes. To allow this to happen Jan stayed two extra days in Seattle at her own expense to gain the first ever Show Managers qualification and met with the AmQHA Executive to bring these classes into being at our National Show. They are now offered at many other major shows in Australia.
- Jan's years as an International Director representing Australia were very active and resulted in a greater communication between the AmQHA and our AQHA. Detailed Reports were published for the member's benefits in the QH News.
- Our AQHA Judging System came into being. As a member of the HSAA the AQHA had no control of their destiny and also the HSAA ticket did not include Halter. The Board at the time were very passionate as protectors of our Stud Book and as the judges set standards they felt that our judges should be aware of the Quarter Horse Standard of Excellence. Sue Farrell was given the Judging Portfolio and Jan held Show & Performance so a Panel was formed and the AQHA held clinics. Phil Rodey and Paul Farrell attended most as panellists. This entailed hours of preparation and organization and both Sue and Jan travelled the country organizing and holding clinics, prepared Test Papers that had to be corrected etc. This resulted in many weeks away from home and as all this was voluntary a personal loss of income for Jan.



- Jan was given the task of representing the AQHA on the Australian Horse Council Board. At the time the Horse Council was not recognized as the Peak Industry Body so a handful including Jan, burned the midnight oil restructuring the Council to become the Horse Industry Council to incorporate goods and services, and everything connected to equines. Due to Jan's high profile involvement the AQHA became held in high esteem by fellow horse bodies and State and National Governments. Every opportunity was taken by Jan to raise the AQHA profile even higher resulting in a broad awareness of the Quarter Horse and the association. Jan replaced the Hon. Andrew Peacock in the Chair when he accepted his Washington Post as Australia's Ambassador. Previously to Jan's involvement with the AHIC very few were aware of the important point that the AQHA existed. Governments only knew of racing and the EFA due to the Olympic disciplines. Jan showed many of these politicians that there were in fact many other horse sports, breeds and performance bodies and that they too were important to the economic impact and voting

numbers.

- The Riding For The Disabled is another of Jan's passionate interests and there is no doubt that the Quarter Horse temperament more than suits that purpose. Jan liaised with the association and set up protocols to enable disabled riders to be able to compete in special

classes at AQHA shows. This information was passed on to the AmQHA and inspired the Rules and Regulations. Jan drew up patterns for RDA events, often judged special classes and made sure that a QH appeared on their annual poster printer of 5.000 that was widely distributed to equestrian clubs, business etc., all around Australia. When the RDA held a fundraising event – “Bums On Saddles” Jan organized James Reyne to appear on national television to publicize the event and made sure that the Quarter Horse got some publicity as well.

- All facets of the AQHA are promoted by Jan, including Racing. Jan, Sue Farrell and VQHA President of the time, Ray Prohasky were the AQHA delegates to Bob Jane when Sprint Racing was held weekly at his Calder Park Raceway. Between races Sue, Ray and Jan organized and ran short performance sessions in a specially purpose built arena. The general public were then exposed to the versatility and temperament of the breed. Previously to this Jan had worked with Racing Convenor, Brian Hooper to hold meetings with racing members, put together Rules & Procedures for QH Sprint Racing and she had officiated as judge for the 1991 AQHA Invitation Stakes with Jack Cooper and Gordon Nash.

These points are merely a few that are mentioned; however they do in fact show the dedication to the breed and the association.



Her desire to promote the breed outside of the equestrian circles included Pet Expos and when involved with the Yarra Valley QH Association she organized a five day exhibition at a local large shopping centre, Chirnside Park. The Twin Arenas, the home of the YVQHA, was set on a busy road that overlooked the western shows, club days etc. and due to the outfits, western saddles etc. many locals and

passer bys, were given the impression that it was a rodeo ground and therefore did not know about the club's activities. Jan managed to get a large area in the centre of the complex and set up television sets to run AQHA provided videos, promotional material and two stalls for horses. Members manned the area, and the general public met youth, competitors and responded with interest to the type of competition that went on in Swansea Road. The display attracted local media interest and the profile of not only the YVQHA as a family based club, but the breed was



also highly promoted. AQHA activities such as the amateur and junior divisions were highlighted. Visitors were amazed at the versatility and the vast range of events servicing competitors from new chums to the top range of competitors. As a result

spectator numbers increased at the Yarra Valley Classic and the Improver Series numbers doubled. Some local 'English' competitors were 'converted' to the western scene.

Jan Miller continues to promote the Quarter Horse to this day. During March of this year, a first cross eventer by her stallion won the prestigious Young Event Horse at Wandin Horse Trials and few on the ground did not know that the gelding was Quarter Horse bred. In a dominated Thoroughbred and Warmblood world Jan makes sure that the Quarter Horse is always up there in recognition. Despite the fact that Freedom bred horses have won Barastoc Titles, A Trans Tasman Challenge, Three Day Evented, Show Jumped, Dressage titles and other prestigious awards, it is the Quarter Horse that is given all the credit.

Jan Miller is an avid historian and a journalist. It is no wonder that she keeps QH History Files and has worked with Ricky Glen when he held the Hall of Fame portfolio. Recently she published her Manual and it is no surprise that even this promotes the Quarter Horse and the AQHA. She sings the praises of the AQHA in the chapter on hereditary disorders and highlights the importance of breed associations taking on the responsibility. To quote only one of few mentions of the AQHA on page 11 – *“...I urge committee members and directors of breed associations to follow the lead of the Australian Quarter Horse Association and address genetic disorders and put into action procedures to deal with them. They will not go away by themselves and will put any breed at risk.....and just as the AQHA is doing, strengthening the future of the breed.”*

Currently Jan’s time is taken up with her breeding and foaling facility, judging, instructing and weaning and handling youngsters. She continues to write and as well as republishing some local histories has just completed a Breeding Casebook. Jan keeps her connections to the AQHA as she is a member of the Stud Book Sub-Committee. A mixture of breeds pass through Freedom and this gives her the opportunity to expose the Quarter Horse to many others. Visitors to Freedom QH’s are amazed at the temperament, quality of movement and conformation of the stud’s horses and Quarter Horse mares that are sent to Jan to foal down, and the youngsters that are being weaned or handled.

“Yes” she is still promoting the Australian Quarter Horse as the horse for all reasons.