

JIM SIMMONS CONTINUED:

is crucial. Jim is recognized by his fellow horsemen as one of the most experienced and knowledgeable horsemen in the industry. Jim has trained and sold more horses than he can remember. In addition to training and showing, Jim was a regular at the Simmons' Heart of America Sales, which were held twice a year for many years. At each sale Jim would ride a couple dozen or more horses through the sale, and oftentimes Jim would agree to ride horses through the sale that he had never previously seen much less ridden. From the time he started out as a youngster through today, you'll find him getting his own horses ready and putting them away, and doing whatever needs to be done around the farm. He is as hard of a worker as you'll find anywhere. For several decades Jim and his father maintained 100 or more head of horses. Today Jim and his wife Mary Jane operate a training barn just outside of Mexico that they built in 2001 where they continue to train 17 to 20 horses and breed a handful of horses a year.

Jim and Mary Jane have two children - Scott Simmons, a doctor practicing medicine here in Mexico, and Jennifer Simmons, an attorney practicing law in St. Louis. Scott is married to Jessica Simmons, a pharmacist, and they have two children, Elaine Jane (5) and Trevor James (3). Jim continues to work 7 days a week training horses, and he and his wife are still regularly spotted front and center at horse sales picking up colts and anything of interest. If you ask Jim whether he ever thinks about retiring, you'll see a twinkle in his eye and a hint of a grin. There's still more to come.

Sourced and written by: Jennifer Simmons



Posthumous Honoree



TOM BASS (1859-1934)
Mexico, Missouri



Born a slave in Boone County, Tom Bass became a legendary trainer of American Saddlebred horses in a world that had always been considered a white man's profession. Due to his incomparable talents with horses and gentle nature, he rose to fame and celebrity status at a time of racial segregation. As a young man, Bass moved to Mexico and worked as a driver for the Ringo Hotel transporting passengers from the train station to the hotel. He soon began working for the partnership of Cyrus Clark (Clark built the Big Barn on the Boulevard in 1887) and Joseph Potts. While working for Potts and Clark, Bass was given his first opportunity to show an uncontrollable mare named Blazing Black. From that moment on, his career took off showing in horse shows throughout the nation. Through his talent, skill, and invention of a new bit, Bass was able to tame the wildest of outlaw horses. He rode in the Inaugural parades of Grover Cleveland and Calvin Coolidge, was the first black American to perform at Madison Square Garden, and was a friend of five Presidents of the United States. Bass is credited with helping start Kansas City's American Royal horse show. Some of Bass's famous horses include Belle Beach, Jack of Diamonds, Miss Rex, and Buffalo Bill's white horse Columbus. At his death in 1934, his name was a household word. Even Will Rogers, a syndicated columnist, paid tribute to him by dedicating a column in his memory. Bass was considered a great trainer and rider of show horses along with being a great gentleman. Unfortunately, his barn was burned by an arsonist in 1997. The Simmons' Stables Preservation Fund, Inc. is in the process of developing historic and educational signage to designate the location of the Bass home and barn. He was inducted into the Hall of Famous Missourians in 1999. We honor Tom for his incredible legacy, devotion and care with the American Saddlebred horse.

(Photo courtesy of the Audrain Historical Society)



International Saddlebred Hall of Fame
warmly welcomes you to our



2ND ANNUAL HALL of FAME CEREMONY



*** SATURDAY, JUNE 3, 2017 ***

International Saddlebred Hall of Fame

Paulette Schroeder, Master of Ceremonies

Historic Simmons' Stables, Mexico Missouri

Social Hour: 5pm, Dinner: 6pm



Tonight's Itinerary

Welcome: Bobette Balser Wilson

Invocation: Harold Enslin

Dinner: 6pm

Bass Bit History: Tom Usnick

Reflections: Valerie Schofield

Introduction of Master of Ceremonies: Mary White Littrell

Master of Ceremonies: Paulette Schroeder



Honoring a Barn's Legacy from 1887

This year marks the 130th anniversary of the building of the Big Barn on the Boulevard. In 1887, Cyrus Clark built the barn for his string of racehorses which included the famous Robert Rysdyk, one of the ten fastest trotters in the world. He built the barn for a cost of \$5000 while purchasing Rysdyk for a hefty price of \$6000. Once the barn was completed, a barn dance was held to honor his partner Joseph Pott's daughter, Miss Willie Potts, who later became the wife of Dr. Ned Rhodes. The barn became part of a saddlehorse dynasty that lasted over 100 years. Along with being the home to countless champion horses, numerous famous trainers have either operated the barn or began their careers here including the Lee Brothers, John Hook, Bill Cunningham, Arthur and Jim Simmons, and Jimmy Hite to name just a few. During World War I, the stable served as a gathering point for horses and mules sent to Europe to help with the war effort. In 2004, the site was listed on the National Register for "national significance" as the "Arthur Simmons' Stables Historic District. Preservation efforts began in 2001 and the 16-year journey continues to restore the barn and surrounding buildings.



2017 Honorees

DALE & GLENDA PUGH (APRIL HILL FARM) New Bloomfield, Missouri



In the early years, Dale and Glenda worked for the well-known Callaway Hills Farm in New Bloomfield. While at Callaway Hills, Dale played a role in training the legendary Will Shriver. At their April Hill Farm, Dale and Glenda began a legendary breeding and training operation developing a long list of young horses including Supreme Attraction. Glenda showed some of the great ones such as Callaway's Capers and Preferred Prince. Glenda's interest began at an early age when her grandfather first put her on a horse. At the age of 11, she got her first American Saddlebred. Her father cared little about horses, but Glenda and her mother shared a love for horses. Her career has spanned 70 years. Dale and Glenda trained horses and, even though they did not actually give riding lessons, they taught riders how to ride on their own horses. One of the highlights of Glenda's career was beating Art Simmons on her walk/trot mare at the American Royal. Art got 2nd in that show. According to Glenda, "Art was the hardest to beat and she thought she really had a feather in her cap when she beat Art Simmons!" Dale has been inducted into the United Professional Horsemen Hall of Fame, St. Louis National Charity Horse Show Hall of Fame, and the American Royal Hall of Fame. Dale was known nationwide as one of the best trainers of young horses. He served in the United States Navy during World War II and passed away at the Veteran's Home in Mexico, Missouri, February 17, 2008 at the age of 90. Dale and Glenda consider one of their greatest accomplishments to be their ability to make training a horse and the rider such a pleasant experience that the horsemen continued in the sport. They were very proud that the majority of their customers stayed in the business for the long-term.

Source: Interview with Glenda Pugh, 2/16/2016; Horstalk.co.nz, March 2008; Information from Don Harris, Feb. 2016; Dale Pugh obituary, [Eulton Sun](#), Feb., 2008



2017 Honorees

DON HARRIS Simpsonville, Kentucky



Few horsemen have reached the pinnacle of their sport as has Don Harris. Don was born in a small town in Indiana, the son of a coal miner. In his early years, Don dreamed of being a basketball coach. His father purchased a horse for him while growing up and riding began as a hobby. He moved to Shelby County Kentucky in 1969 to work on Copper Coin Farm at the urging of Marjorie and Wendy Wagner. Harris has trained and competed in horse shows for over 50 years winning some of its highest honors. He has been awarded the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) Lifetime Achievement Award and the Jimmy A. Williams Trophy, American Horse Shows Association (now USEF) Horseman of the Year in 1980, American Saddlebred Horse Association's C.J. Cronan Sportsmanship Award in 1996, the ASHA Lifetime Achievement Award in 2009, and Horse World's Trainer of the Decade and Trainer of the Century. Harris also was inducted into the UPHA Tom Moore Hall of Fame in 1993 and the Kentucky State Fair World Championship Horse Show Hall of Fame in 1994 along with his friend and fellow competitor, Art Simmons. He has won nine World Champion five-gaited gelding classes and has trained five, five-gaited World Grand Champions; six, three-gaited World Grand Champions. Don also holds a record 14, five-gaited championships at Madison Square Garden; won a record 13 times at the Rock Creek five-gaited stakes; and was the 1993 five-gaited Triple Crown winner. Fellow horsemen attribute his success to training, showmanship, and sincere kindness. Harris has developed some of the greatest American Saddlebreds in history: CH Imperator, CH Giddy-Up-Go, CH Protégé, CH Sultan's Starina, and CH Finisterre's Gift of Love. He has also promoted the breed abroad by playing a role in sales to horsemen in Germany, South Africa, and Haiti. While Harris now only rides occasionally, he is still involved in the business providing consulting services to young trainers.

Sources: [The Sentinel-News](#), Jan. 9, 2015; usef.org press release, Jan. 6, 2011; Resolution by the Senate of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

JIM SIMMONS Mexico, Missouri



Jim was born in Omaha, Nebraska where his father was the trainer at a barn called Almarel Stables. Jim and his family moved to Mexico, Missouri when he was nine after the family purchased the Barn on the Boulevard. Jim gravitated towards the horses as soon as he could walk and picked up the tricks of the trade like it was his first language. When Jim was very young his parents found themselves in a panic back in Omaha because they could not find him anywhere. They searched the farm until they found him, much to their bewilderment, inside the stall of the farm's stallion standing on the tailboard. They asked Jim in frustration why had he wondered in and climbed up on the tailboard. The then tiny Jim said it was because the horse's tailset needed to be adjusted. Jim took to training horses from a very early age. He began racking horses at the age of 11. As a teenager, Jim's ability to work with young colts garnered accolades from hundreds of trainers. Jim has trained horses seven days a week his entire life, except during his years at the University of Missouri. Even then, he drove home on weekends to work with the horses. After graduating, Jim moved back to Mexico and officially joined his father in the business. Jim became Art's right-hand man. The two made an indomitable team. Until later in Art's life, Jim would typically stay home during horse shows and work horses while Art would take the show string out on the road, however, in 1967, Art suffered a lung collapse while he was at the Pin Oak horse show in Houston, Texas. Fortunately Art made a full recovery, but not soon enough to make it to the next horse show that year, which was Lexington Junior League. Art told Jim that rather than skip the show, he wanted Jim to go to Lexington and show the string for him. It was at that horse show Jim stepped out of Mexico and into the spotlight. Jim made an impression that week that wasn't soon forgotten with wins at the reins and/or aboard such horses as Tashi Ling, Spirit of 76, Great Choice, and American Revelation. Jim states you have to understand a horse before you are really able to train it. You have to understand how they think, and realize each horse is a little different. To train a colt you have to have patience, good balance, sensitive hands, and selecting the best bit for each colt ...