

CONNECTICUT HALL OF FAME

Black Gold Windsor

by *Barbara Irvine*



The first equitation horse to ever be inducted into the prestigious Connecticut Hall of Fame, Black Gold Windsor, thrilled us all on Friday evening with memories of his unprecedented career as the King of Equitation. “Winnie” looked great, complete with his very special crown clip shoes for his triumphant return to the show ring where his riders and fans surrounded him. It was an emotional high that continued on into the wee hours of the morning with a huge celebratory party complete with fabulous food and dancing at the Equitation Unlimited stalls that were decorated with Winnie’s plaques and coolers extending all the way across three stall fronts and around the corner. Winnie’s name was spelled out in flowers decorating the stall area. - an unforgettable and heartfelt tribute - the celebration of the life and career of a great Morgan horse.

This is the speech that was read in the ring during Winnie’s induction into the Connecticut Hall of Fame:

BLACK GOLD WINDSOR

Black Gold Windsor, or “Winnie” as he is affectionately known, was bred by Sharon and Marilyn Baxter and Hazel Osterly of Sperry, Oklahoma. He was born on June 5, 1982. (Happy 27th Birthday, Winnie!) He is by the Chasley Superman son, Kendalwood Diplomat, and out of an Orland Leader daughter, Bar T Regina.

Winnie had been shown as a park horse, especially in the mid-west, up until he was a five-year-old. Elizabeth Hobby of The Morgan Connection even had the privilege of driving Winnie at The Jubilee Horse Show. But Winnie’s life was about to change after Oklahoma National.

Rick Davis told Jean DeGutis about a horse that she might be interested in. The horse was with Chet Sowle. Jean set up an appointment at the Morgan Grand National and tried out Winnie before the show even began. Jean saw something special in this young stallion. She just loved him – his personality and that he was so big and bold. She wanted him – and when Jean wants something – she wants it!

However, the people Jean had interested in the five-year-old park stallion were not impressed with what they saw. Jean looked again with the hope that they might change their minds. Meanwhile, another one of her clients mentioned that if she really liked him that much, they would buy him.

And they did!

Black Gold Windsor was to be National Champion Michelle Fisher’s new park mount with equitation in his future. An unfortunate automobile accident left Michelle paralyzed and unable to ride her new horse, but with hope of a full recovery, the Fishers kept Winnie and Jean campaigned him in the open park saddle division. When Michelle’s recovery turned out to be longer than expected, Jean convinced the Fishers to sell Winnie and she promised

he would never leave the barn in the hope that one day Michelle could ride him.

Jean had a student that owned an Arabian farm and they really didn’t care for the Morgan breed, but when they saw Winnie in the show ring, they said to Jean “...if that horse Winnie ever becomes for sale, we want first refusal, we think he is so special.” And so in 1990, Rosalie Leary became the proud owner of Black Gold Windsor.

For the next five years, Rosalie showed Winnie to numerous park saddle championships including Grand National Reserve Youth Park Saddle. Now Rosalie and Winnie were ready for the real challenge of equitation and learning patterns.

Winnie, being a very particular horse in his work schedule, and I mean very particular, was up for the challenge of Rosalie’s final 13 and under year. Well, hard work did pay off with qualifying Winnie for The Grand National. Rosalie and Winnie began their life together by becoming the Junior World Champions and Grand National 13 and Under Equitation Champions. They became the Triple Crown winners with two World Saddle Seat Equitation Championships, one UPHA Senior Challenge Cup World Championships and one AMHA Medal Championship with 65 riders competing. After Rosalie’s equitation years came to an end, Jean purchased Winnie to become Nikki Rae Woodworth’s new equitation mount. Nikki also became a Triple Crown winner with three World Saddle Seat Equitation Championships, one UPHA Junior Challenge Cup World Championships, and at 14 years of age, UPHA Senior Challenge Cup Champion and AMHA Medal Champion with 60 entries in the class.

Winnie, to date, is the winningest equitation horse in Morgan history.

As Nikki’s equitation career ended, Jean gave many students the opportunity to show Winnie, like World Champion Junior Equitation rider, Jamie Kalalas, World Champion Dawn Rene Bien who captured the Reserve AMHA Medal at Oklahoma. In 1989 he was also Rick Lane’s equitation mount in the professional equitation class at Connecticut Morgan. Rick practiced tirelessly to compete and prevail in this class. Samantha Weinand and Raisa Herrera were also privileged to campaign Winnie on the New England circuit.

Years earlier, Jean was offered an exorbitant price for Winnie, but a horse like Winnie comes once in a lifetime and there was no price tag on him. (So, you see, some horses have no price tag.)

Today, Winnie enjoys his retirement in his own pasture at home. He is cherished and loved deeply by all that have been blessed with his presence and undeniable personality. There are many other great horses, but none quite like Winnie – he captures your soul and touches your heart – he is a true champion. So it is with great honor that I present Black Gold Windsor into The Connecticut Morgan Hall of Fame and celebrate his retirement and also his twenty-seventh birthday.

Winnie, we all love you! ▣