

# Bill Riddle

by Jill J. Dunkel

**B**ill Riddle's career as a cutting horse trainer overflows with outstanding horses and phenomenal wins. He is revered by many as a superb teacher and loyal friend. But it is his dedication to the betterment of the NCHA that is recognized and appreciated, as he is inducted into the Members Hall of Fame.

The World Champion collegiate calf roper, turned history teacher, found his true calling in 1977 when he went to work for his brother, Terry. "In 1975, Terry had a mare called Lenaette that won the Futurity. He showed me a copy of the check he'd won for \$30,500. I had been rodeoing, trying to win \$400 day monies. When I saw that check, I knew cutting was a better deal," said Riddle.

It didn't take long for Riddle's career to take off, with his first big win at the 1981 Derby aboard Docs Otoetta. But Riddle did not focus his career solely on training horses. From the beginning, he got involved in NCHA, wanting to help improve the association and the sport of cutting.

Riddle's first recommendation to the Executive Committee involved creating a standard for judging that is the basis of today's system. "I would sit around and listen to judges. I'd hear them say things like you better do so-and-so under me, and so-and so under me. I realized that everyone interpreted the rules a little differently."

During Riddle's tenure as a school teacher, he refereed

basketball games as a way to stay in shape. Officials were provided a case book, to guide referees in their interpretation of the rules. "I thought we needed a case book for cutting to provide a basis for more uniform judging," he said.

Riddle wrote an initial draft of NCHA's case book, which has evolved into the standardized judging system used today. "It was certainly tweaked, added to and fixed, but that was the start of NCHA getting a judging system based on the interpretation of the rules."

Riddle also chaired the Sales Committee that began screening horses for the 2-year-old Futurity Sale, opening NCHA sales up to the entire membership. "I have always strived to make our events fair for the whole NCHA." He also chaired the Limited Age Committee when the present entry payment system was implemented. "Keeping our Futurity strong is good for all of cutting; I have never lost sight of that."

As a loyal ambassador of NCHA, Riddle has continued to work for the improvement of the association. He served many years as an officer and Executive Committee member. He held the office of Executive Vice President in 1985, 1990 and 1991. He was elected Vice President in 2004, President Elect in 2005 and President of NCHA in 2006.

Zack Wood, who nominated Riddle for the Members Hall of Fame, said, "Few can say that they have served an association for as long, and in my opinion, as well as Bill Riddle. He is an outstanding example of the type of member the Hall of Fame was created to recognize."

For Riddle, the magical accomplishments with such notable horses as Laney Doc, Aglows First Rio and Poco Quixote Rio, with which Riddle won the Gold & Silver Stakes Million Dollar Cutting, Stylish And Foxy, Fannin Sugar, Marlena Starlight, Peppy Docs Mimosa, and Miss Stylish Pepto are just a small part of his successful career.

"To me the horse business is not a job, but a way of life. My clients have become my good friends, I take training their horses very personal.

"The kids that have worked for me—Paul Hansma, Guy Woods, Jeanine Koehler, my daughters Kelly and Havey, and Dusty Nelsen, who works for me now—they've made training horses fun and a pleasure to do. My wife, Anne, makes it possible for me to train horses, keeping the whole thing in order. And watching my granddaughter, Ali ride and show, that's as good as it gets for a granddad," he said.

"When I received the Zane Schulte Award, I told my wife that someday I hoped they'd see fit to put me into the Members Hall of Fame. This is really an honor, and for Terry to go in the same day with me, that's really special." ★

