

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS CANDIDATES BIOGRAPHIES



## SUSAN ASCHENBRENNER, URBAN DALE, IA

Susan taught Kindergarten in the public schools before going on to become Director of a private Preschool, teaching three and four-year-old children, as well as being involved with the business management of the school, retiring in 1996.

Susan and her husband John's breeding farm, Dream Acres, LLC, purchased its first broodmare from Dr. Alan Raun about six years ago, and have since increased their band to five mares, which, until 2011, were at Reedannland. They built and opened their own barn at their farm in Cumming, Iowa in March of 2011. In addition to the mares, they have three foals and three yearling fillies at the facility, and are expecting five foals this spring.

Susan's show horses include, among others, <sup>CH</sup>Callaway's Cumulus, which, in 2010, took first in Country Pleasure Driving at the UPHA/American Royal National Championship. Other honors included being the ASR National Pleasure Horse Award in Country Pleasure Driving, *Saddle and Bridle* magazine's Best of the Breed Champion, and *Saddle Horse Report's* High Point Champion.

Susan has served as a Board member, President, and Treasurer of the Iowa Horse Show Association, and has chaired the Des Moines Springfest Horse Show since 1993.



## BETSY BOONE, CONCORD, NC

Betsy was born and raised in Charlotte, North Carolina, and has lived in Concord, North Carolina since 1995. Growing up, Betsy began showing Hackney ponies at local shows, and upon seeing American Saddlebreds at open shows, she was attracted to their beauty and had to have one.

First attracted to Saddlebreds as a teenager, and a frequent observer from the rail, Betsy wanted to learn more about the horse industry, so she worked locally with Bill Becker and Lewis Eckard. She also taught at Porter's Riding Club in Charlotte, and would eventually become what is now referred to as an "AOT," or, Amateur/Owner/Trainer.

She would go on to start an academy program, which she currently operates. Betsy currently serves as Secretary for the American Saddlebred Association of the Carolinas (ASAC), Co-chair of the ASAC Academy Committee, and is involved with the Boones' Farm Youth Club. She is also an ASHA Lifetime Member, a member of several ASHA Committees, as well as the United States Equestrian Federation Safety Committee, and has served as Secretary/Treasurer of UPHA Chapter 12.

Betsy promotes Saddlebreds through riding lessons, and by volunteering with her local Charter Club and United Professional Horsemen's Association Chapter on various promotions such as breed demonstrations and horse shows.



## RANDALL CATES, EDMOND, OK

Randy Cates, along with his wife Elizabeth, owns and operates Cross Creek Stables in Edmond, Oklahoma. The son of noted horseman Royce Cates, Randy has spent his life in the Saddlebred industry. A native of Tennessee, he was raised in California, and has lived in Oklahoma for the last nine years. Cross Creek Stables is known for exposing new people to the Saddlebred industry, taking them from their first riding lesson to the world championship level.

Randy is a member of the United Professional Horsemen's Association and the American Hackney Horse Society, and is Vice Chair of UPHA Chapter 6/7. He is also an advisor to the Oklahoma Centennial Horse Show and the UPHA 6/7-NTASHA Horse Show.

Growing up with Royce Cates, Randy watched and learned from his father who, arguably, was one of the greatest Saddlebred promoters. Randy has applied that knowledge to his business and expanded Saddlebred prominence in Oklahoma. He believes his experience promoting Saddlebreds and starting new people, as well as his strong grasp of the industry outside its mainstream markets, would make him a valuable addition to the ASHA board.



## REDD CRABTREE, SIMPSONVILLE, KY

Redd Crabtree has served the business of breeding, raising, training and showing American Saddlebred Horses for over 60 years. He has served on the ASHA Board of Directors, served as Vice President, chaired numerous committees, including the Breeders Committee and ASGN. He was President of ASGN before it became part of ASHA. Redd is also a founding member and past President of UPHA.

He has received many awards in recognition of his service, including induction into the UPHA Hall of Fame, Kentucky State Fair Hall of Fame, ASHA's C.J. Cronan Sportsmanship Award, and most recently, ASHA's Lifetime Achievement Award. Redd has won multiple World's Championships, including World's Grand Champion <sup>CH</sup>Will Shriver, World's Grand Champion (SA) Zovoorbij Commander In Chief, World's Champion <sup>CH</sup>Santana Lass, and World's Champion <sup>CH</sup>Popular Time.

Redd is a consummate horseman, devoted father, and dedicated husband.



## GERMAINE JOHNSON, LEXINGTON, KY

Germaine Johnson has been involved with the Saddlebred Industry in varying capacities since 1998. Included in her Saddlebred experience are showing, breeding, and a veterinary practice. She is a Pharmacist with Rood & Riddle Veterinary Pharmacy.

In 2002, Mrs. Johnson joined the ASHA Auction Committee, which involved procuring items to be sold, and working directly with the auction. This same year, she also joined the ASHA Youth Committee. It was during Mrs. Johnson's tenure as an ASHA Youth Committee member that the Saddlebred Mania Program was implemented for ASHA Youth, which provides youth with the opportunity to decorate horses to be sent to ASHA for sale in its auction. The program also offers the youth a certain degree of ownership in the auction program.

She was instrumental in organizing all of the Saddlebred participants and volunteers for the 2010 Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games. The American Saddlebred was featured in the Opening Ceremonies, the daily breed demonstrations and an information booth for ASHA, UPHA and the American Hackney Horse Society. In February 2011, Germaine was recognized for her work in presenting the American Saddlebred to the world, with a Lifetime Membership to ASHA.

Mrs. Johnson currently serves as Chairperson for the ASHA Youth Committee, having held this position since 2008. As Chairperson, she oversees the ASHA Convention and all activities currently involving ASHA Youth. During this tenure she implemented the ASHA Youth Scavenger Hunt and Golf Cart Decorating Contest, both held during the World's Championship Horse Show. It is very important to her for the youth to have an avenue to interact with the trainers and those whose work has involved the American Saddlebred for many years.

In 2008, Germaine was elected to the ASHA Board of Directors. She represents the ASHA Youth and all activities associated with the youth.



## DARRYL LEIFHEIT, LEXINGTON, KY

Darryl grew up on the Leifheit Homestead, a livestock, grain and dairy farm in northern Illinois' De Kalb County. His great grandfather and grandfather raised

Percherons and owned Saddlebreds. American Saddlebred horses as 4-H projects were a big part of Darryl's formative years, and his summer job after high school was grooming for a Saddlebred show barn near Aurora, Illinois.

In the 70s and 80s, Darryl owned Leather Ridge Farm in Illinois, and showed Saddlebred three-gaited and five-gaited pleasure horses. He was also on the ground floor of the founding of the Illinois American Saddlebred Pleasure Horse Association, and for a brief time authored a humorous column in the organization's newsletter, titled *The Last Straw*.

After graduating from Northern Illinois University in 1975 with a degree in Biological Science, Darryl accepted a sales position with the IBM Corporation in Rockford, Illinois. After a successful career with IBM, he was then offered a management position with a young entrepreneur in Austin, Texas, named Michael Dell.

Eventually Darryl and his wife started Knight Skye Farm, and in 2002, moved their

entire horse operation to Kentucky, desiring to be in the heart of America's Saddlebred horse country. Darryl's life experience with Saddlebreds has included working western horses, western gaming competitors, saddle seat three-gaited, five-gaited, and fine harness show horses, dressage competitors, combined driving competitors, cross country eventing and jumpers.

Among the attributes Darryl can bring to the ASHA Board of Directors are leadership experience in people management, public speaking, business operations, sales, and marketing, as well as an understanding of the American Saddlebred's importance and cultural significance in the history of Kentucky and the United States.



### DAVID RUDDER, LEXINGTON, KY

David was born in Jacksonville, Florida, and later lived in Ohio, where he learned to ride American Saddlebreds at the age of nine. He has been showing horses for more than 40 years,

and began showing on the grass roots level with both of his parents and sister, at shows in Ohio, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania in the 1970s.

In 1976 his family moved back to Florida, and he continued riding and showing under the guidance of Dick Kearney and Bud Gray. In 1984 his father met Larry Hodge and Joan Hamilton, and later moved the family's horses to Kalarama Farm.

David won his first World's Championship under the direction of Larry Hodge, and since then has owned, shown and/or bred horses that have won dozens of World's Championships. He has won numerous World's Championships in the amateur divisions of Five-Gaited, Three-Gaited, Fine Harness, Pleasure, and the Weanling, Yearling, and Two-Year-Old divisions of the National Futurity.

After graduating from Louisiana State University in 1985, he began working with his father in the oil and gas exploration and production business. In 1990, David founded North American Energy Corporation as an independent natural gas marketing company, before selling that business in 2007 to Seminole Energy Services in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where he currently serves as Vice President of Producer Services.

Today, David and his wife Marie, along with their daughter, Alex, reside in Lexington, Kentucky, where they continue to share their love and passion for the American Saddlebred.



### JANET STERBA, KESWICK, VA

From 1999 to 2005, Janet owned and operated Seven Oaks Stable, a full service boarding, training and show facility for American Saddlebreds in Somerset, Virginia.

A few years after starting the business, Janet moved to the farm permanently to work in the barn and help manage the operation. She also handled the business side of the farm, preparing business plans, cash flow statements, and tax documents.

Having the opportunity to own an American Saddlebred farm was a dream come true for Janet.

She and her husband are from New Mexico, and fell in love with the breed when first seeing a Saddlebred in the summer of 1980. She knew little of the breed at the time, but seeing the mare flip her tail up over her back and snort, that was it.

They bought the mare on the spot, and never looked back. They continued to expand in New Mexico with various horses through the years, including show stock, prospects and broodmares. For years they kept their horses at home, training, showing, hauling and foaling out of their backyard operation.

Eventually, as their careers got busy, they moved their horses to trainers and continued their Saddlebred education. Through the years, they have had horses with Alta Mira Farm, Crumpler Stables, Seven Oaks Stables, Grey Ridge Farm, and now with Mercer Springs Farm, and Janet says "The entire journey has been a privilege."



### JOAN TODD, GREENFIELD, IN

Joan is a longtime ASHA member, member of the Pleasure Committee, Human Resources and Compensation Committee, as well as a long-time member of the Board of

Directors for the Indiana American Saddlebred Horse Association, Tri-State Horse Shows Association, and United States Equestrian Federation. She is also a former committee member for the All-American Horse classic, and is currently on the committee for River Ridge Charity Horse Show.

Joan began riding as a child, primarily Morgans and Saddlebreds, but also hunters & jumpers, and Quarter Horses. She began her riding career with Janie Ginther (Jane Hartmeyer Ginther), and ended up working with Marcella Lahr, finishing one of her horses, Bold Flare, after Bob Whitney and Jim Taylor showed him in Fine Harness.

After raising a family, Joan returned to Saddlebreds, successfully showing Avanzare, Emily Grey, and currently, Highly Charmed. She likes to have "the best" in a given division, and is still working toward that perfect gaited and walk-trot horse. Joan bought the stallion Slama's Storm (Phi Slama Jama x Santana's Summer Storm, full sibling to <sup>CH</sup>Springtime Santana) and, with some mares from Bob Ruxer and advice from Judy Werner and Jim Aikman, began breeding on a small scale.

Due to her husband's passing in May 2011, Joan has scaled back a bit on showing, but has two colts that will be starting in earnest this fall, one of which appears to be quite a nice gaited prospect, and a four-year-old she has sold is doing very well in training.



### KENNETH WHEELER, KESWICK, VA

Kenneth Mason Wheeler, Jr., like his parents, the late Sallie Busch Wheeler and Kenneth M. Wheeler, Sr., has enjoyed American Saddlebreds throughout his life. At an early age, Kenny showed road ponies with Jim B. and Jimmy Robertson to much success with World's

Champion High Spirit and Superfly. In the 80s he drove his wagon horse Autobahn to 12 world titles under the direction of Sam Brannon. He is well known for his ability to catch drive Saddlebreds, Hackneys and Standardbreds, as well as handling in-hand futurity colts.

Kenny, with his wife Ceil and their girls Catherine and Sallie-Mason, have enjoyed owning and showing many champions such as Strapless, Summer Sweet, <sup>CH</sup>Victoria Lynn, <sup>CH</sup>Walterway's Remember Me, Memories Paragon, Joe Friday, Prom Dress, Swing An Singin, <sup>CH</sup>Desert Supreme Kid, <sup>CH</sup>Amelia Heir Cat, and <sup>CH</sup>Pucker Up.

Currently, Kenny serves as President and CEO of Virginia Eagle Distributing, an Anheuser-Busch/InBev distributor based in Charlottesville, Virginia, as well as Arkansas Distributing in West Memphis, Arkansas. He also serves on the Virginia Horse Center Board, the Keswick Hunt Club Board, and is a member of both ASHA and USEF.



### WILLIAM G. WHITLEY III, CARY, NC

Early in his career, William G. Whitley III worked as an assistant to his father at a private Saddlebred training stable in Wilson, North Carolina.

Harrell's Horse Farm in Fayetteville, North Carolina, where Mr. Whitley also worked as an Assistant Trainer, won many North Carolina State Championships in the early 1960s.

Mr. Whitley also worked as an Equitation Instructor and Assistant Trainer at Greenfield Farm & Riding Academy, in Wilson, North Carolina, and developed a summer riding camp for students. In the late 1960s, Mr. Whitley developed a riding program for Atlantic Christian College, in which students could enroll in a riding class as one of their electives for physical education.

In the 1970s, Mr. Whitley worked as the Senior Portfolio Manager for the North Carolina Department of the State Treasurer, managing the \$65 billion portfolio for the Teacher and State Employee Retirement System, retiring in 2004. Mr. Whitley served as Assistant Manager for the North Carolina State Championship Horse Show from 2001 to 2007, and in 2008 began serving as Manager.

As he has done since 1974, Mr. Whitley currently officiates about 30 shows a year, as Ringmaster. Included in these shows are the World's Championship Horse Show at the Kentucky State Fair, Morgan Grand National & World Championship, and UPHA-American Royal National Championship. Mr. Whitley has also received People's Choice Ringmaster of the year from 2001-2010.

Mr. Whitley has coached Little League Girls Softball for 30 years, participates in each ASHA auction, and is currently a member of various USEF Committees. He is also associated with the Raleigh Host Lions Club and American Saddlebred Association of the Carolinas, and has been recognized as Lion of the Year and received the North Carolina Lion's Foundation-Dedicated Humanitarian Services Award, both in 1999.

Photo by Gayle Strickroot