

CH The Homecoming Queen Did It All

BY BOB FUNKHOUSER

She was so aptly named, enjoying celebrity status from an early age all the way through to her recent passing at the age of 28. A daughter of the highly regarded CH Superior Odds son, Penny's Superior Stonewall, out of a full sister (Hometown Belle) to the great World's Grand Champion and World's Champion of Champions CH Home Town Hero (CH Yorktown x Barham's Reality BHF by Denmark's Bourbon Genius), life came easy for CH The Homecoming Queen.

The Queen grew up in the pastures of Harrodsburg, Kentucky's famed Oak Hill Farm, like so many other great American Saddlebreds bred and raised by the late Jean McLean Davis. George Knight was her first teacher and what a team they

made. Their first eight performances were all wins, including the Two-Year-Old Fine Harness Sweepstakes at Lexington Junior League and Two-Year-Old Fine Harness Sec. I World's Championship, Lexington's three-year-old title and the Three-Year-Old Fine Harness Mare World's Championship.

When Knight and Davis parted ways, Jim Koller had the next six drives, winning all six. Among those victory passes: Lexington's Junior Fine Harness Stake, the World's Champion Junior Fine Harness Mare and World's Champion Of Champions Junior Fine Harness titles as well as Lexington's Fine Harness Mare Stake the next year.

The Queen was reunited with Knight for the 1992 Fine Harness Mare World's Championship and Fine Harness Reserve World's Grand Championship, the first defeat of her career. Defending world's grand champion CH Roselawn's Secret Rhythm, driven by Mike Barlow, was the horse that gave her that first defeat.

"We brought her in as a long yearling, which was unusual for Jean [McLean Davis] to bring one in that early," remembered George Knight. "We didn't have to do a lot to her, we got along great. You could be very kind to this mare. All you had to do after you got her legged up was keep her fresh, put the harness on and go. Anybody could train her.

"In the spring of her two-year-old year we took her to River Ridge and she was outstanding, a freak. She won at Lexington and Louisville that year and did the same thing the next year. I had started riding her and she was no problem but she just didn't look like a walk-trot horse. Then when I left Jean's she sent the mare to [Jim] Koller's and he won the junior stake with her at Louisville and looked really good. Then I got her back and we won the mare stake and were second in the championship with a first place vote.

"Later that year Raymond [Shively] called me about buying her for the Chancellors. I called Jean and told her we had a serious buyer and she said, 'No, I don't want to sell her.' Well, I think she talked to her financial person and decided selling her wouldn't be a bad idea as we had her priced pretty good. Then I told her they wanted a breeding to Man On The Town and she hung up on me. I called her back and she wouldn't answer. Finally she came around and we worked it out."

"I told George that was the only way they were buying her if we got the two breedings to Man On The Town," added Raymond Shively, the trainer and agent for the Chancellor family. "At first they said no and then Jean said yes but she would get half interest and I said no to that. She eventually said she would do it but she would get first option on the colts. She did and bought them both."

Steven Chancellor did get to purchase the great mare for his wife Terri. Among their accolades, the 1994 and '95 World's Champion of Champions Amateur Fine Harness titles, as well as amateur championships at the American Royal and Rock Creek and the ladies blue at Lexington.

"The Homecoming Queen was a big, grand mare that was a thrill to show every time we hit the gate," remembered Terri Chancellor. "In our 17 trips to the ring I won 14 classes, three reserves and I was blessed to win five world's championships with her. I enjoyed her in the stall as much as I did in the cart. She had a very kind nature and was a true pleasure to be around."



Terri Chancellor and CH The Homecoming Queen won five world's titles in 17 career classes.

Raymond Shively showed the Queen the last time under the Chancellor ownership, winning the Fine Harness Mare Stake at the 1996 American Royal.

"That mare and Terri were a perfect match," said Shively. "That mare was so pretty and had so much motion. I remember leading her down the ramp at Louisville one time and her knee was over the top of my head. She was so gifted, no mechanics required. We rode her a little just to do something different and she did that pretty well too. I loved that mare. She was good every day. We hardly ever hooked her, just long lined a lot."

Lileen Dunn purchased the Queen in 1997 and showed her once before beginning her career as a broodmare. Then, at the right place at the right time, Debbie Foley became the new owner in May of 2005. What happened from there was quite remarkable!

Foley owned the Queen for nine and a half years and in that time had 17 foals for her over a seven-year span. Of those 17, (2) are just now two-year-olds, (1) died, (1) was a pleasure horse, and (13) were high dollar show horses, six of them selling for six figures. The first foal for Foley was Homecoming Heir (by CH Heir To Champagne).

Over the next five years she had foals by Attaché's Royal Assets, Designed, Desert's Supreme Memories, Sir William Robert, Callaway's Blue Norther, and He's Born To Royalty. The list of worlds, national and regional champions included Without Any Doubt, Always Remembered, Especially For Me, At Any Given Time, A Magical Melody, I'm Coming Home, Mark Of Perfection, Five Star Day, The Final Four and Take Me Home Tonight.

"This mare has been so great to me," said Debbie Foley. "She lived at Dr. Foss' in Missouri because she couldn't carry her own foals. Then when she couldn't get in foal anymore I brought her home and she lived like a queen here with Scarlett Santana. She died with dignity.

"I had sold Hoof Prince for Lileen [Dunn] so when I had the opportunity to buy her, I did. Her foals are dead game and very athletic. It's funny, the more I breed horses, the more I learn, especially when I think about the traits that mares pass. Besides stuff like heart and motion there are so many little habits and things that get passed along, like sometimes she would pitch one foot and her colts will do the same.

"She produced herself a lot. I won the UPHA Fine Harness Classic Grand Championship with two of her daughters and if you put the pictures side by side you can't tell, which is which and they're by different studs.

"The best one I ever raised was a mare named Kanga Roo. She got hurt as a baby and damn near cut her leg off. When she was old enough to start training she could rack and trot correctly, but that injured hind leg prevented her from making it to the ring. She's the most beautiful mare you've ever laid eyes on and she's in foal to I'm First for a foal this year."



George Knight was the Queen's first trainer and he won three world's championships and a reserve world's grand championship with her, in addition to titles at Lexington Junior League as a two and three-year-old (pictured).

We haven't seen the last of the Queen's stars. Sitting in the wings at Silver Brook is a two-year-old filly by He's Born To Royalty named Prom Theme. "She's a harness filly like her momma," said Foley. "She a little salty but she's talented and can hang her head in a fancy place."

When it comes time to remembering some of the greatest mares that did it all, the Queen will rank right up there with the best of them. She graced the show ring at the highest level for seven consecutive years and then for many years after that produced show ring star after show ring star. She was a joy to train and a joy to own.

And just as she is a product of generations of world-class performers and producers, there's no doubt her daughters will pass those same traits to the next generation.



CH The Homecoming Queen stamped her offspring with a distinctive look. Half sisters A Magical Melody and Take Me Home Tonight both won UPHA Fine Harness Classic Championships.