

# Celebrating The Retirement Of The Record-Setting JW THAT SPECIAL FLAIRE GCH

On Friday May 27, 2016 at the Southern States Regional Morgan Horse Show, the record-setting Morgan Park Harness World Champion JW That Special Flaire GCH was officially retired. Surrounded by his trainer, Ken Swanson, and owner, Frances Pugh, as well as the team at Tara Farm, "Tigger" took one last trip around the show ring in harness. After modeling in the ring for photos, the trio of Tigger, Ken, and Fran left the ring together. A surprise note was waiting for them back at the barn, as well as a bundle of carrots for Tigger. The note included lines from A. A. Milne's "Winnie-the-Pooh," from which Tigger had been given his name. Tigger attended the party Friday night so he could visit with fans and enjoy his own red carpet walk to his stall. Decorations around the stall included photographs, roses from the Morgan Grand National and a painting of Tigger. It is only fitting that Tigger was able to take his last spin around the Raleigh show ring at the show that his owner has dedicated so much of her time and energy to promote year after year.



photo by Howie Schatzberg



The following speech was read by announcer Wyatt Lilly during Tigger's retirement ceremony.

JW That Special Flaire, affectionately known as Tigger, burst onto the show scene in 2005 at the New England Regional Morgan Horse Show when he was two years old. Guided by his breeder and trainer, Hall of Famer Judy Whitney Harris, he won the Two-Year-Old Park Harness qualifier and the Two-Year-Old Park Harness Championship. This is where trainer Ken Swanson first laid eyes on Tigger, and he immediately fell in love. That same year, Tigger made the show of a lifetime at the Morgan Grand National and World Championship by winning the Two-Year-Old Park Harness Futurity World Championship, the first of many world championships to come. Ken Swanson, who had kept close tabs on Tigger, made a phone call into the stands of the coliseum to Frances Pugh to consider buying the chestnut colt. After the first direction of the class, Frances Pugh told Ken to buy the colt.

Tigger was the talk of the show and had a line of trainers waiting at the out-gate to purchase him after the class, but a deal had already been struck with Judy and Frances Pugh, and Tigger was now the property of Tara Farm. The decision was made by Judy and the Tara Farm crew to go for the world champion park harness title. Two nights later, Tigger made history by being the only two-year-old Morgan ever to win the Park Harness World Championship with a unanimous vote of the judges. He still holds this distinction today, as no other two-year-old has won this championship.

Tigger was going to stay under the direction of Judy Whitney Harris through his junior years. In 2006, he was crowned Southern States Open Park Harness Grand Champion, East Coast Park Harness Grand Champion, the Kentucky State Fair Park Harness Champion, the Three-Year-Old Futurity

Park Harness World Champion, and finally, the Park Harness World Champion for the second time.

Tigger started the 2007 show year by winning the Open Park Harness qualifier and championship here at the Southern States Regional Morgan Horse Show. Judy Whitney Harris fell ill in June of that year and could not continue training. The decision was made to bring Tigger back to North Carolina, and in late July, Tigger made his new home in Raleigh. With his new trainer, Ken Swanson, Tigger was shown at the North Carolina State Championship Horse Show and won both Morgan Park Harness classes. Tigger finished out the season by winning the Four-Year-Old Park Harness Stallions qualifier at the Morgan Grand National, and then he won his third Open Park Harness World Championship title. 2008 marked an undefeated year with wins at Southern States, Mid-A, New England, and a record-breaking fourth world championship by winning the Open Park Harness World Championship. He is the only horse to ever win four Open Park Harness World Championships to date.

Tigger has been UPHA Park Horse Of The Year four times and was also the 2007 Horse World Horse Of The Year. Noble Flaire was the Horse Of The Decade in the 1980s; HVK Bell Flaire was the Horse Of The Decade in the 1990s; and following in his sire and grandsire's footsteps, Tigger was named the Horse World Horse Of The Decade from 2000 to 2010. Please give Tigger a very, very loud round of applause as he makes his last appearance in the show ring. Ladies and gentlemen, one of the winningest park harness horses of all time, JW That Special Flaire.