

The 2016 Year In Review Is Dedicated To

EMERSON

BY BOB FUNKHOUSER

Mileage wise it's not a long ways from the Amish country of Ohio to Louisville, Kentucky's Freedom Hall, but when taking a horse from the roadways of that countryside to the biggest stage in the show horse industry and then going down in history with the most consecutive Roadster To Bike World's Grand Championships, it is a long and interesting trip indeed.

"I got a call from Emerson Wallingford who said he had seen this Amish horse on the road and he had my name written all over him," said Raymond Shively when asked about the great roadster's humble beginnings. "I picked up Emerson [Wallingford] and we take off to go look at this horse. When we get there the guy wasn't there. Emerson finally tracked him down and the man told him it would be a while before he could get back but he told us where his harness was and for us to go ahead and hook him and drive him.

"I put Lucky [Wallingford] in the bike so I could watch him. After a couple of trips I said to Emerson, 'Let's just call and tell him I'll take him.' The next day I sent a guy up there to pick him up. He was six and he's a blood brother to Big Red. He's by the same horse and out of a full sister to Big Red's dam."

Shively purchased the horse he named Emerson as a project and had him on the back burner as he was showing Big Red at the time. The red horse [Big Red] that Lillian had picked out for Raymond as an anniversary present won the bike world's grand championship from 2005 through 2009. In 2008, Shively finally brought Emerson out and won championships and qualifiers at Asheville and Indy and then was reserve in the USTA Classic at Louisville. That same year they swept the division at Mane Event and closed out the year winning the OHHA Green Roadster To Bike Classic Finals at Toronto's Royal Winter Fair.

Still not doing a lot, in 2009 they again won at Asheville and Harrodsburg and then Shively had Jerry Miles drive Emerson in the amateur class at Louisville where they were reserve world's champions to Mr.'s Bones and Charlie Jones. Shively and



Asheville Lions Club was the site of Emerson's first Roadster To Bike Championship.



Emerson and Raymond Shively top the history charts with Emerson holding the record for six consecutive world's grand championship and Shively holding the record for the most bike world's grand championships, 23.



Shively said some of Emerson's best assets were how he could trot a turn and that he was a show horse.



Emerson and Shively won multiple times at Kansas City (pictured), Lexington, Louisville, Midwest and Asheville.

Emerson returned to Toronto where they won the Green Roadster To Bike Classic Finals for the second time. That classic is for horses with two or less years of experience.

Mark Turner enjoyed two drives to start the 2010 season out winning both classes at Indy Charity but the second stringer still wasn't campaigning much. Following Midwest Charity, Shively's five-timed world's grand champion Big Red died unexpectedly so it was time for Emerson to step into the starting line up. Answering the call, the open and championship at Lexington Junior League, followed by the bike stake at Harrodsburg set Emerson up for a run at Louisville for the first time in the open division.

Shively and Emerson won the stallion/gelding qualifier and then came back in a large championship and flat turned it on to win the first of six consecutive World's Grand Champion Roadster To Bike titles. To win that first title they beat Mr.'s Bones, Belle Starr, Iamnotacow, Valparaiso, Show Me the Money, Can't Drive 55 and Beaucourt Boy, in that order.

"It's kind of weird that this horse's fate was dependent on the death of another horse. He got the fortune of Big Red's misfortune," said Mark Turner who has helped Shively with several of his road horses over the years. "If Big Red hadn't of died unexpectedly, we might not know Emerson's name right now.

"This is a special horse to Raymond and he stepped up at a time that Raymond really needed it. I've known him for a long time now and he doesn't show much emotion. I've only seen Raymond cry twice: when his dog died and when Big Red died. It was really hard on him. So I think for that fact, Emerson really holds a special place in Raymond's heart.

"At the new farm here, we've got Emerson turned out in the same lot that was Yorktown's. He's a special horse and I didn't think just any horse should occupy that lot so he's turned out there with Power Ranger."

Another world's grand championship

and the Roadster To Bike National Championship would be a part of an undefeated 2011 season for Emerson and Shively. This pattern continued through 2015 with the exception of two classes, a reserve at Asheville to Iamnotacow in 2014 and a reserve at Louisville in the 2015 qualifier to B-52.

They came back to win their sixth consecutive world's grand championship in 2015 setting the record in the road horse division, a record previously held by the full blood brother, Big Red. Shively holds the record for the most Roadster To Bike World's Grand Championships at 23, so how does Emerson rate with his other greats?

"Well, they all had some great qualities but Emerson is such a pretty horse," said Shively. "He can really trot the turn. He's not as fast as Non Stop was but he is so correct with everything he does. He can trot the turn as good as anyone's horse.

"He's the same every day. He's a lot like Big Red was; they're just horses at home. Now when you put that overcheck on he knew you were ready to do something. Emerson is more of a show horse than some of my others. I never changed his work routine. We jogged three and a half to four miles every day and always with his head down. When we were getting ready for a horse show I would take him out and check him up the day before we left and he would get fired up. He knew the difference when we got to a show."

This past season we saw a different Emerson. Shively moved him to the wagon division where the results were the same.

"After I showed in the bike class six years he won it more times than any other horse so I thought we should go Wagon one time," explained Shively. "Actually, when I bought him I was thinking wagon but when Big Red died Emerson was his replacement for the bike division."

Emerson won the class at ARHPA in Harrodsburg, KY, in his first attempt at the



Heading up this victory pass, Lillian Shively is the biggest fan of the record breaking world's grand champions.



An undefeated 2016 season in the wagon division was Emerson's last. He will be retired at the Mercer County Fair (pictured) in 2017.



A longtime member of the team, Mark Turner escorted Shively and Emerson from the ring for the gelding's final victory pass in a career remembered for seven Louisville championships, five qualifying wins and three reserves in 15 appearances.

four-wheel vehicle. Two victory passes at Midwest Charity and one last warm up at Harrodsburg was perfect for two winning trips on the green shavings, including a unanimous World's Champion of Champions Roadster To Wagon title, defeating the defending champion.

"We're going to retire him at Harrodsburg this year (2017)," said Shively. He's 19 and that's enough. He loved it and he did so much for me so I need to do something for him. He's still sound and feeling good turned out with Power Ranger.

"He was a great horse to work and show. He did everything right: good in the stall, good to hook. The only thing he didn't do was stand to get his picture taken. I don't know what it was? He was fine in the line up but when you went down to get your ribbon and have your picture taken he didn't want any part of it."

Shively has made a career of being the man when it comes to the roadster division. You can't think of one without thinking of the other.

"I think the roadsters really suit his demeanor," said Mark Turner. "He's laid back and he keeps it simple. For years I would watch him chomping on a cigar and driving those horses two miles and hour and I would think, 'What is he doing?' He clicks with the Standardbreds and I'll give him credit as the type of road horse has changed over the years Raymond has changed with it. He's very much a Standardbred man and is a huge believer in type but he has adapted with the time. Judges today are looking for more shape from the road horses than they were 15 and 20 years ago."

"God has given Raymond so many talents with his hands and the ability to put road horses together for open, amateur and ladies. It's just amazing to watch," added Lillian Shively. "For all those years at DeLovely I had my thing, Todd [Miles] had his thing, Mark [Turner] had his thing and the road horses were Raymond's thing. As good as he is with a gaited horse and a walk-trot horse and a harness horse, the road horses are what make him tick. He lives to be behind the cart. That goes back to our time in Wartrace, TN, with Cooper and Crawford. He was around the very best road horse men at that time and developed a passion for it. His dream was to be able to do things like those guys could with a road horse. That's what he strived for."

It's safe to say that Shively's passion, experience and success have put him in a place no others have gone and pretty safe to

say, no others will go. Up until this year no other driver has won the Roadster To Bike World's Grand Championship in the new millennium and 2015 was his final appearance in that championship. That is mindboggling!

Emerson gave Shively the last six titles and a reason to go to the barn when that wasn't the easiest thing following Big Red's death. Testament to the caliber of horseman Hall of Fame trainer Raymond Shively is, he has made the decision that Emerson will be retired this year so he can go out on top.

The Mercer County Fair has always been one of Shively's favorites and now that it is his hometown horse show, it will be the perfect place for Emerson's fans to cheer him on one last time. He'll take those perfectly banked turns with ease and shoot down the straightaways like he owns them. It will be the last time the "Master of Faster" will turn on the winningest world's grand champion roadster of all time.



Emerson's final bike victory pass was in 2015 and broke the record with six consecutive world's grand championships.