

A Leader Of Many Fronts Betty Goshorn Weldon



The influence of Betty Weldon and Will Shriver will never be forgotten.

by Bob Funkhouser

To many of those in the horse business who knew her, she was fondly known as "Will's mom." To presidents, local politicians, publishers and television station owners Betty Goshorn Weldon was a strong-willed lady who had great vision and even greater determination. She was a fearless businesswoman, an unmatched student of her industries, both work related and recreational. Underneath all of that she had a heart as big as "Missouri" - the home state she loved and to which she gave greatly. One way or the other, she left lasting impressions on all those she came in contact with.

Today, many sectors of the country mourn the April 18 death of Mrs. Weldon who died at her home following a lengthy illness. She was 85.

Grabbing opportunities and daring to do the impossible all along the way, Mrs. Weldon was the first woman in the United States to launch a television station. She was the founder of KRCG-TV, the call letters in honor of her father Robert C. Goshorn. Her business acumen was also applied to local radio stations and newspapers - thus the names of many of the champions she bred and raised from her legendary Callaway Hills in Jefferson City, Mo.

"Dad had the greatest respect for her, he just loved her," said Melissa Moore whose father, Tom Moore, was a confidant to Mrs. Weldon as well as trainer for many of her champions. "She could be a tough lady, but you have to be tough if you're a woman in any business. I think as most successful people are, she was perceived as being very tough, but she was really very kind.

"I got to show a gaited pony and a gray mare for her one time and I was so impressed at how kind she was

to me and how genuinely interested she was that I got a chance to do well. I'll never forget that opportunity.

"As far as her impact on the horse industry, I don't think anything like that will happen again. The Callaway Hills horses are so far reaching and have been for some time. Some of my dad's best champions came from there. Last year at Louisville my only winner was Callaway's Independence Day. Sally Lindabury and I were talking while we were judging the UPHA 14 Spring Premiere last week and we commented on how many Callaway prefixes there were at a show in Massachusetts. Her horses are everywhere and it's a blessing that we [the general public] have been able to buy them lately because of their sales."

Betty Goshorn's successful road in the horse business has been well documented. Her first two horses were purchased from the famed breeder/dealer George Gwinn. They were Fourth Estate and Kate Shriver. Both would be world's champions and both would be the foundation of the greatest breeding program the Saddlebred industry has ever known.

Fourth Estate was bred to World's Grand Champion Wing Commander to produce Callaway's Johnny Gillen. Kate Shriver hadn't produced much at the time but when bred to the then of age Callaway's Johnny Gillen she produced Rob Shriver, who became a Juvenile Five-Gaited World's Champion for Jamie Davis and a Reserve World's Grand Champion for Tom Moore - all in the same year. The next foal would be Will Shriver.

The tough young stallion was sent to Redd Crabtree upon the advice of Garland Bradshaw. While he didn't possess the stretch of some of his peers, Will Shriver worked his way up the ranks eventually defeating every gaited horse he ever showed against. Fulfilling Mrs.

Weldon's dreams, Crabtree took Will to the winner's circle of the 1976 Five-Gaited World's Grand Championship. He was then retired to stud.

It was Mrs. Weldon's drive and vision that helped push Will to the pinnacle of the Saddle Horse world and it was that same drive and vision that took him to the top of the breeding world. She bred him privately, hand picking the mares that had been selected for their old bloodlines and substance. Surpassing even his grand-sire, the legendary World's Grand Champion CH Wing Commander, Will Shriver became the greatest sire of five-gaited horses ever.

"She did more for the horse industry than anybody in our history," said Redd Crabtree in an earlier interview for Mrs. Weldon's dedication in the Year In Review. "I shudder to think what the industry would be like without her horses. She did it out of love for her horses. She was so determined that her horses would be successful. I couldn't imagine working horses for a better owner. All you had to do was tell her the truth."

Mrs. Weldon's journey through her business life and equine activities was shared by her husband of many years, the late Bill Weldon.

A son, Frank Gifford Weldon and two daughters, Lenore "Tony" Weldon and Sally Proctor, survive her. Tony keeps her mother's dream alive as Callaway Hills continues to operate as the nation's leading Saddlebred nursery.