

The Tall Man



Tom Moore was the largest figure the Saddlebred industry has ever known.

by Bob Funkhouser

"No single individual has had a greater impact on this industry than Tom Moore," said trainer and former UPHA President Lonnie Lavery reflecting on the death of 'the Tall Man.'

"He changed the way we work horses, the way we show horses, and the way the public training stable has evolved. As founding father of the United Professional Horsemen's Association, he made life better for professional trainers and owners."

At a time when so many unknown Americans just lost their lives and became national heroes to us all, the hurt of many people in the Saddlebred industry was made heavier by the September 18 passing of our home town hero, Tom Moore, 67. While his career began in Illinois and ended 50 years later in Kentucky, he was a hands on hero to many across this land. His greatest joy was reaching out to give help to his peers, and while very few could actually qualify as his peer, he didn't distinguish between the UPHA Hall of Fame trainer and some skinny kid with a pair of riding gloves in his back pocket. Perhaps that was his greatest quality: he didn't know he was TOM MOORE.

"Even at the height of his greatness he was so available to all that needed him," said Lavery. "He went out of his way to help others, people and horses. The horse industry and the people in it were his entire life."

"When any horse had a problem being sick or unsound, Tom would drop everything to help the person with that horse," added Oak Hill Farm owner Jean McLean Davis for whom Moore worked for several years. "It didn't make any difference if it were an established horseman or a newcomer, he would stop what he was doing and go to their aid. I asked him about it one time while we were at a show and he said he had a lot of help from older horsemen when he got started and this was his way of giving back. He said they didn't have to help him, but they did."

One of the most highly respected horsemen of his day, Chester Caldwell, was one of the first to give Moore a leg up. He sent Moore to the famed Valley View Farm in Barrington, Illinois to help with J.L. Younghusband's upcoming production sale. "Moore told me that he went there to help with a load of horses Younghusband was putting through a sale in St. Louis," said Bill Carrington. "When they started loading the horses to take to St. Louis, Moore told Younghusband that this broodmare was waxed over and should not make the trip as she was ready to foal. Young husband told Moore to stay behind with the mare and indeed she mare foaled that night with Moore delivering a filly.

"Younghusband and his current trainer went on to St. Louis and sold all of the horses," continued Carrington. "Then after several drinks, he fired his trainer and bought a bunch of new horses. When Younghusband returned to Illinois he asked Chester Caldwell what he should do since he had fired his trainer and had all of these new horses. Caldwell told him, 'that kid will work your horses and I'll keep an eye on him and help him out.'"

Thus, at the age of 16, Tom Moore was the new manager/trainer at Valley View Farm. That filly he delivered while Younghusband was on his way to St. Louis was named Miss America and two years later she would become Moore's first world's champion winning the Two-Year-Old Fine Harness Stake at Louisville.

The Tall Man went on to win every open Saddle Horse class offered at the World's Championship Horse Show, with the exception of the recently added park division. In a quiet, humble manner he commanded the respect of fellow horsemen, owners, and breeders from many disciplines.

What separated the Tall Man from his peers was his uncanny ability to think like a horse, be a part of that horse and flow with the horse. He was a master horseman and an even more dangerous showman. Like the Michael Jordans and Tiger Woods of the world, Moore performed best under pressure, when the big money was on the line. He was cool and calm when it counted most, yet struck like a cobra with some of the most dynamic passes ever witnessed in the show ring. Those who were around in the early '70s still get goose bumps thinking about the powerful shows he made with the

1970, 1971, and 1972 Five-Gaited World's Grand Champion CH Yorktown.

"He defined the art of showing horses," continued Lavery. "He changed everything. People used to laugh when he worked horses at night after the show. Now that is common place. He put so much drama in the way he showed horses, from patent leather saddles, to riding one handed, to tossing his hat into the crowd after winning a world's grand championship. He had so many wonderful horses, but I think the class I will never forget was at Lexington when he showed The Contender against My My... and he didn't win that one."

Moore stayed at Valley View Farm until 1958 when the Saddle Horse division of the farm was discontinued. During that time he also developed world's champions Mr. Ike, Lady A Flame, and of course Valley View Supreme, still the only stallion to ever win the Three-Gaited World's Grand Championship.

In 1958 the Tall Man hung out his own banner in Wheaton, Ill, a facility which would produce the likes of Bo Jangles, Rebel Rouser, Scarlet Flame, Premier Fleetwood, Rendezvous, Bonanza, World's Grand Champion Miss Helen, Private Stock, and Jimmy Joe. Another life-changing event was his 1959 marriage to a horsewoman named Donna Hobbs. It was also during that time that Edward Jenner purchased a pony named Dipsy Doodle from the industrious, young trainer.

That relationship led to the hiring of Moore as manager/trainer of Jenner's newly purchased Knolland Farm in 1964. Tom and Donna Moore, managed the former Frank Howard estate in Richmond, Ill. The facility featured a 49-stall training barn, a 13-stall yearling barn, and a 74 stall broodmare barn. From 1964-1970 there was an endless procession of world's champions, the likes of which has not been duplicated today. Some of the Knolland notables included World's Grand Champion Bellissima, World's Grand Champion Duke Of Daylight, World's Champion The Contender, World's Champion Hallelujah,



Photo by Jamie Donaldson

The crowd always acknowledged Moore and in turn he acknowledged them.



As a couple Tom and Donna Moore were unstoppable.



The Moore family: Tom, Melinda, Donna, and Melissa.

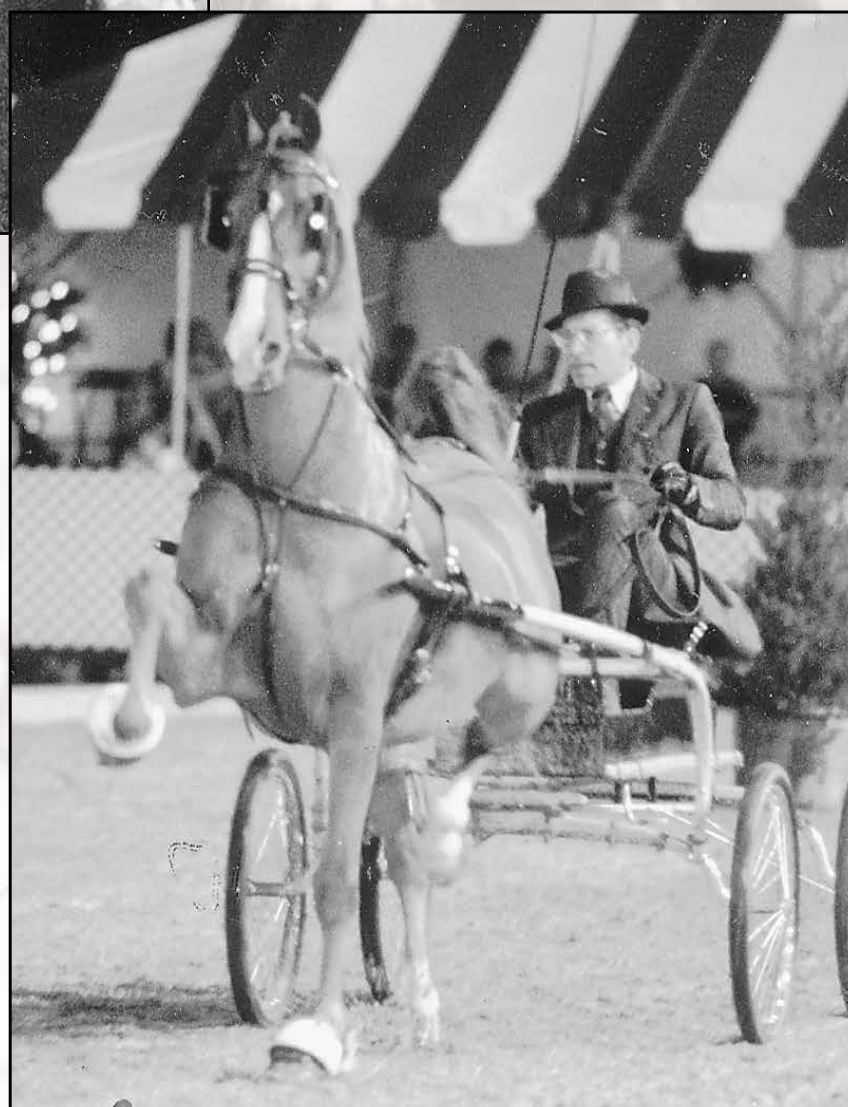


Photo by Glenn '93

Be Happy gave Moore his fifth and sixth Fine Harness World's Grand Championships.



One of the great images in Saddle Horse history is this picture of a young Tom Moore with Doc Flannery.

World's Champion Hayfield's Majorette, World's Champion Big Time, World's Champion Ernestine Supreme, World's Champion Step Lightly, World's Champion Lady A Flame, World's Champion Mr. Moonshine, World's Champion Showtime, World's Champion Patent Leather Stonewall, World's Champion Love Note, World's Champion Cara Mia, World's Champion Bernadette, World's Champion Lillie O'Lee, World's Champion King's Rocket, World's Champion Master Supreme, World's Champion Danny Dee, World's Champion Top Hat, World's Champion Tinker Bell, Hackney Pony World's Grand Champion Wing Commander, and in 1970 Five-Gaited World's Grand Champion CH Yorktown.

"The last time we were together at Louisville we had 36 blues," recalled Donna Moore.

The union of Tom and Donna Moore created a force that was unbelievable. They were a great team, complementing each other's strengths. They also became the parents of Melinda and Melissa Moore.

"He lied to me when we got married," laughed Donna. "I never would have married him if I had known he was younger than me."

"Tom was a superior horseman," she said on a more serious note. "He didn't toot his own horn. He was a very quiet person and I think that's rare for someone of his talent in this business. And maybe the best thing about Tom was he was so inventive. He came up with the patent leather saddles; the matching brow band and caveson sets; he founded the UPHA; he was the first to show a stallion as a walk-trot horse. He was under great pressure to castrate Valley View Supreme. No one ever showed a stallion as a walk-trot horse. Can



Long after their divorce Tom and Donna Moore remained great friends. In this picture Donna had just given Tom a bucket full of bits that had been badly burned in a fire that destroyed the entire training facility and many horses. Donna salvaged the bits and had them re-chromed for Moore.

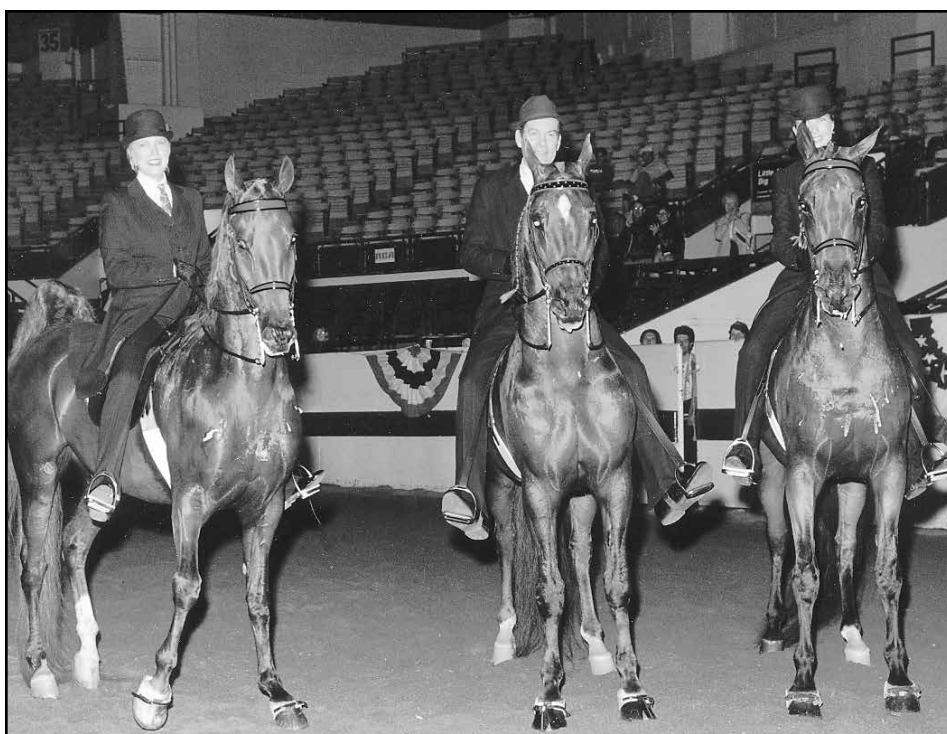
ever wanted. I thought he was just a big straight-necked horse. Looked like he swallowed a tail board to me. However, Tom got that horse and he bent his neck and they were sensational together. Maybe one of the best ones. Tom was equally good with ponies and pretty darn good with a road horse, although he was so tall he looked awkward in a bike. Cecil Wheeler once said Tom was the only person he knew who could jog one and ride it at the same time.

"Tom was just a superior horseman and he helped everyone. I'll tell you another story. Nelson Green was a big, chubby kid. He lost 100 pounds in order to come to work for Tom. He lost that weight and came back to us wanting a job and I didn't even recognize him. It meant that much to him to work for Tom."

Following the Knolland Farm Dispersal in November of 1970, Moore moved to Kentucky where he has been for the past 30 years. For three years he was manager/trainer of Mark Dickey's Grape Tree Farm in Versailles, Kentucky. In addition to taking CH Yorktown to two more Five-Gaited World's Grand



Lex Town was one of Moore's home-bred world's champions.



This would have been considered a perfect moment for Moore: on horseback with his family.

you imagine the horses we would never have seen if that horse had been castrated?

"Tom was the first one to take great care of his horses and turn them out in a superior manner. Earl Teater once said, 'Tom would beat you in the stall before you ever got to the ring.' He just took great care of his horses."

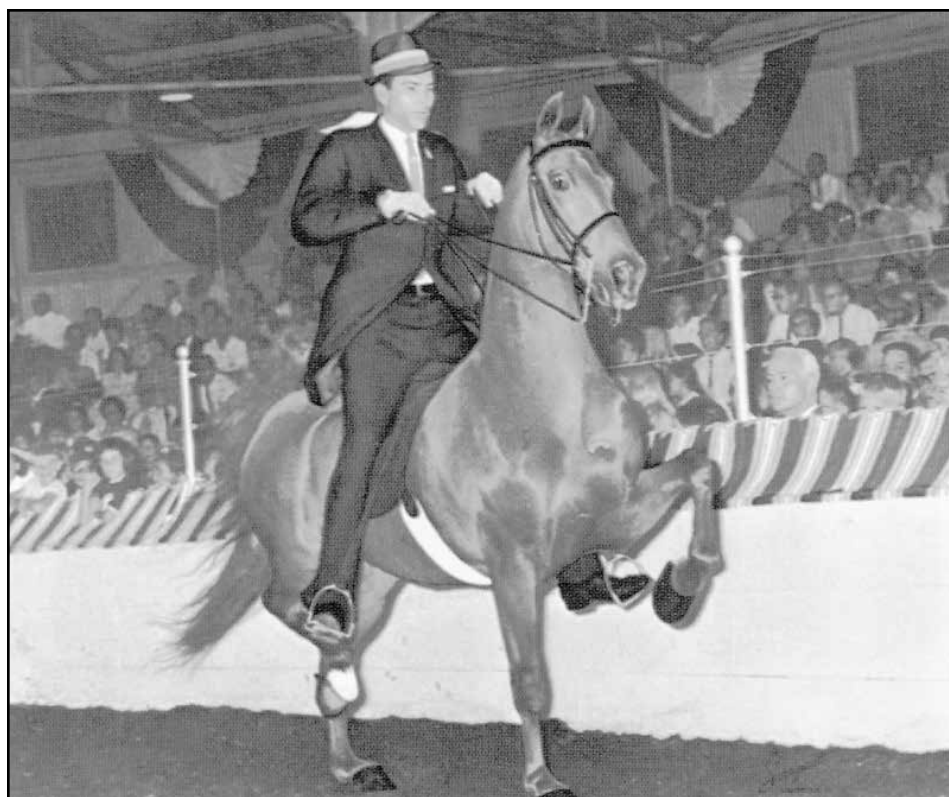
Tom and Donna both had an amazing eye for a horse. And most of the time they were together on their thoughts about a prospect, although Yorktown was one of the exceptions.

"Yorktown was one of the few horses we ever disagreed on," remembered Donna. "He wanted that horse more than anything he had

Championships while at Grape Tree, the Tall Man also had a list of world title holders which included Cabaret, Wing's Fair Lady, Dear One, Woodford County, A Dancing Daffodil, Lotta Firefly, Sweet Sultana, Mr. Terrific, Super Supreme, Supreme Melissa, and Festival Time.

Nelson Green did go to work for the Tall Man. He started at Knolland Farm taking over for Bob Vesel who went to South Africa. Green followed Moore to Grape Tree Farm and stayed with him until Tom and Donna split and then he went to work for Donna.

"It was absolutely a treat to work for him," said Nelson Green. "To this day it is the



One of Valley View Supreme's daughters, CH Bellissima won the Three-Gaited World's Grand Championship with Moore in 1967, '68, and '69.



The Contender was Moore's Five-Gaited Gelding World's Champion and reserve world's grand champion of 1965. He was also the horse involved in the great showdown with My My at Lexington.

highlight of my horse experience. Every day you would just stand there and shake your head in disbelief at what he could do with a horse. He was also so considerate of you. Tom never expected anything from you that he didn't do twice as hard.

"I'll never forget one of the last times he was here to look at horses. He was with Melissa and I got on this horse and after one trip he told me 10 things I could do to help this horse. I had to laugh at myself because it reminded me of just how inadequate the rest of us were up against him."

In January of 1973, the talents of the Tall Man were secured by Jean McLean Davis for her Oak Hill Farm in Harrodsburg, Ky. He had already worked some horses for the famed owner/breeder while at his previous locations. In Harrodsburg the legend continued to be the master of his craft, channeling the energy and talents of the home-bred offspring and many others to still more world's championships. CH Yorktown was retired by Ms. Davis following his '72 World's Grand Championship to sire the future Oak Hill champions.

From the Oak Hill show string, right off the bat Moore trained and directed Ladies Five-Gaited World's Grand Champion Big Time, Junior Exhibitor Five-Gaited World's Grand Champion Rob Shriver, Three-Gaited World's Grand Champion Dear One, World's Champion Chantilly Rose, World's Champion Genius Society, and the first three Yorktown offspring to enjoy Louisville success, Big Town, Gold Town, and A Night On The Town.

Before opening his own Arrowhead Farm in 1978 just a few miles down the road, Moore and Davis continued to dominate the show scene. World's Champion ribbons hung on the red and gray Oak Hill tack room with world class performances from Cedar Creek

Farewell, Happy Valley Treasure, Too Much, Going Big Time, Stable Dream, York Street, Crimsonette, Boom Town, and One More Time, among others.

"I knew him [Moore] when he was a kid at Younghusbands. It was a smaller fraternity back then," said Ms. Davis. "He had horses for us when he was at Knolland Farm and then Yorktown went with him when he went to Grape Tree. I finally talked him in to coming here [Oak Hill Farm]. He was a good horseman with any division.

"He worked hard at what he did," she continued. "The horses came first, nothing else mattered. Tom devoted long, long hours to his craft. He didn't mind working. 'I'll do it tomorrow' wasn't in his vocabulary."

Of all the great horses that were put together by Davis and Moore, CH Yorktown

remains the favorite.

"Tom and that horse [Yorktown] were meant for each other," said Ms. Davis. "He loved that horse and that horse loved him. If you ever saw them you know what I mean. But to further show you what kind of person Tom was, he always gave credit to Charlie Crabtree for doing such a great job with Yorktown as a young horse. Charlie won the Two-Year-Old Five-Gaited Stake at Louisville with Yorktown and Tom always said he could have never taken him as far as he did if it weren't for Charlie's early training."

For so many years he had done so much for others, it was now time to do it for Tom Moore. And for quite a while, the "Moore Magic" continued. Closing out the '70s and into the early '80s, Moore highlights included two-time Three-Gaited World's Grand Cham-

pion Home Town Hero; three more Three-Gaited World's Grand Championships with CH Sultan's Starina; the return of CH Night Prowler to win the Fine Harness World's Grand Championship in '83; and Captive Spirit gave the Tall Man his fourth Fine Harness World's Grand Championship with the win in '87.

When you think there can't be any more, world's champions Stutz Bearcat, Lex Town, Caramac, Well Chosen, Big Bird, Kourageous Kalu, Bold Flamette, Denmark's Music Man, Le Corsaire, The King's Crown, Easter Present, Sweet Someone, Chablis Premier, Crystal Vision, Mint Parfait, Celebrating, Lady Of York, Tropicana Rose, Melrose, Perfect Prowler, and CH Only Game In Town all won world titles under the Arrowhead Farm banner.



Big Time was part of the Knolland Farm success before being sold to Jean McLean Davis and winning Ladies Five-Gaited World's Grand Championships.



Dear One was an extremely popular Three-Gaited World's Grand Champion.



Moore had a string of fine harness stallions over the years including world's grand champion Captive Spirit.

As Ms. Davis said, Moore was an all-around horseman, good in any division. That went for the breeding division as well. During the later part of his career, in addition to working 40-plus horses, Moore always stood a few stallions. Some of those who stood under the Arrowhead banner included CH Yorktown, Kourageous Kalu, Night Prowler, Captive Spirit, Genius Bourbon Prince, CH War Whoop Two, Royal Return, Attache's Liquid Assets, and Black Bottom Pie. A few of the stars that came from his personal breeding program included The Silver Lining, Perfect Prowler, Lex Town, Salemtown, and Carmen Miranda.

In addition, his advice was sought by many including Betty Weldon. Moore would make annual visits to Jefferson City, Missouri to inspect the new foal crops and give Mrs. Weldon input on her famed Callaway Hills program. He worked many and showed many



CH Yorktown and Moore won the Five-Gaited World's Grand Championship three consecutive years before Yorktown retired to become a great breeding horse.

stars for Mrs. Weldon including the famed stallions CH Caramac, Callaway's Blue Norther, and Callaway's Ghostwriter as well as the walk-trot sensation Callaway's Confetti.

Training and showing world's champions into his fifth different decade, Moore still had the touch in the '90s. Who could forget his wild rides with the white-legged gelding CH Unattached, winning the Five-Gaited Championships at Rock Creek and Lexington in 1991 before winning the gelding stake at Louisville. There was also the world's champion harness stallion CH The Missouri Stud and the world's champion harness mare Carmen Miranda.

A few years later and Moore was showing a beautiful four-year-old gaited stallion who hadn't quite put it all together yet. His name was Top Spool. It was also 1993 that the Tall Man won his fifth Fine Harness World's Grand Championship driving Linda Wilford's aptly named entry, Be Happy. They would return in '94 to win Moore's sixth and final Fine Harness World's Grand Championship. Moore not only drove for extreme motion, he was a pretty good hand at speed also. He drove Happy Landing to the 1993 World's Champion Roadster To Bike Stallion/Gelding title.

As discussed by many other professionals, Moore was well rounded. In '94 he presented Royal Flamette Two to win the ASHA Yearling Futurity world title, one of many youngsters he guided to fame for the Lenore family's breeding program.

In fact, '94 was a very good year for Moore. He took two of the three open championships also winning the three-gaited title with Judy Shepherd's Spring High. They would return in 1995 to win Moore's fourteenth Three-Gaited World's Grand Championship. It would be his final ride with the roses although he did win the junior over 15.2 stake that same year with Harlem's Yankee Queen.

Randy Stoess was one of the upcoming



Tom Moore changed the way horsemen thought when he trimmed the former harness stallion Valley View Supreme to win the Three-Gaited World's Grand Championship. He is said to have been the most beautiful horse to ever live.

professionals who worked for Moore during this time period. The eight years he spent at Arrowhead are firmly engraved in his memory.

"Tom's responsible for what we know as show horses today," said Stoess. "I remember going to the State Fair horse show when I was 11 or 12 and it was the first time Tom won with Yorktown. On the way home that night I told my parents I wanted to be a horse trainer and that fall I started working in a Saddle Horse barn.

"Most people don't realize the man he truly was. Everyone in this business works hard, but Tom was so dedicated. People don't know how focused he was. We were working 63 head of horses when I was there and he knew every hair on every horse in the barn. He made all of the decisions. It didn't matter if they were great horses or bad ones. I was there for eight years and I never saw a horse stand in a stall two days in a row. Never.

"The thing I loved most about Tom was

he enjoyed life," continued Stoess. "His horses were always charging and working and that's the way he lived. He could never be still. Once he broke his ribs and was back in the barn the next day like nothing had ever happened."

The master's career was winding down in the later part of the '90s, however, he wasn't done yet. In 1996 Moore would win a reserve in the qualifier and then come back to take Junior Three-Gaited Reserve World's Grand Champion honors with Magnificence In Black. Gotta Be Haute was Moore's Reserve World's Champion Two-Year-Old Fine Harness Futurity entry in '97.

Strangely enough his last world's champion title would come in 1998 when he drove Road Runner to the Kentucky County Fair Roadster To Bike Championship. It was under the ownership of Arrowhead Farm.

Tom Moore was a living legend, although that was a thought that probably



Moore would try to train anything. He was pictured here with Nelson Green and Jack Nevitt teaching them the finer points of mule training.

never entered his mind. There are volumes of stories to tell and at the core of the stories are many of the men and women who worked with him over the years. Some of those who learned their trade under his wings were Bob Vesel, Nelson Green, George Nash, Johnny Lucas, Don Brookshire, Kate Dixon, Bret Day, Randy Stoess, Carl Irwin, David "Butch" Payne, Lisa Rosenberger, Meg Purdy, Eddie Cockriel, Danette Musselman, and Kim Vogel.

Most of Moore's personal life was never personal. A lot of it was made for TV drama, much to his dislike. He has been one to come back from adversity time and time again and in his quiet manner go about his reason for being, to develop and show horses. He survived being shot at by Donna, being run over and stabbed by a buffalo, a barn fire that wiped him out, and rains that flooded his farm on the day of a sale, yet in the end it was a power bigger than his that finally defeated him.

The Tall Man leaves behind five children: Eugene, Gary, Melinda, Melissa, and Mason. He also leaves behind a flock of followers that will never forget how their lives have been touched. If you never had the opportunity to sit down at lunch and listen to tales of great horses past or stand beside this giant of a man as he knelt down and gently cradled one of his many birds, you have truly

missed something. He was a man that loved people and animals and not necessarily in that order.

"He was one of the kindest and most generous persons I've ever met," said Jean McLean Davis.

Son-in-law Jerry Hutson had some of the same thoughts.

"He's one of the reasons I'm a horse trainer," said Huston. "Watching him as I grew up inspired me to be a trainer, to be as good as I can be. I've never met a nicer, kinder person. He always made you feel good about yourself. The greatest compliment I've ever received in my life came from him last year. We were at Harrodsburg and I was going to show Prairie Dancer but we had four or five amateurs going that same night so I decided not to show my colt and concentrate on the amateur riders. Although not in good health, Tom came out to the show and came down the aisle to ask me if I was showing my colt tonight. I told him no, and why. He said, 'Damn, that's why I came out tonight.' I will never forget that as long as I live."

As his youngest daughter, Melissa Moore has had the opportunity to see two sides of him, father and fellow horse trainer.

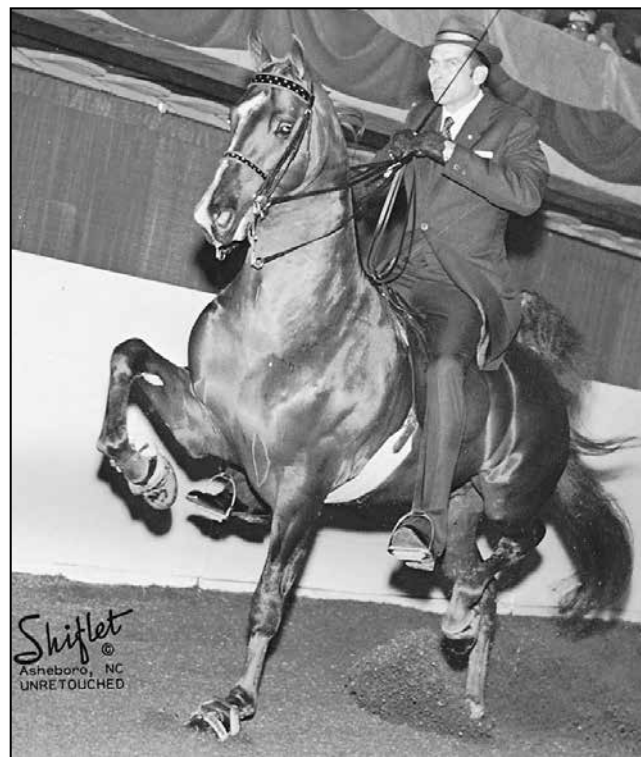
"He was so special," said Melissa. "The hardest part is to see someone like him in the shape he was in at the end. He did teach us everything about horses and life. He was a

true lover of horses. He didn't care about the social aspects.

"I don't think there was ever a bad thought about another person or horse in his whole body. He didn't care about the bottom line, everything he did was for the betterment of the horse and the industry. He didn't have an ulterior motive."

In the end, Tom Moore is at peace. His ashes have been scattered over the ground known as Arrowhead Farm. It was ground he loved. Moore raised and trained horses there, he raised children there, he raised future horse trainers there. When he wasn't working, he was tilling the soil, planting a garden, playing in the flowers. Arrowhead farm was a refuge for animals of all types. Moore was their guardian angel.

Now it is our turn to carry out what this UPHA founding father and Hall of Fame horseman started: always trying to improve



Callaway's Blue Norther was the Three-Year-Old Five-Gaited World's Champion with Moore riding for Callaway Hills.

the horse industry, always reaching out to a fellow horseman.

And as Donna Moore so simply put, "We will remember him as the greatest showman to ever live."



Home Town Hero was the second Three-Gaited World's Grand Champion that Moore showed for Oak Hill Farm.



Moore and Sultan's Starina swept Freedom Hall three consecutive years.