



# RIDING

FOR THE

# TEAM

INSPIRATIONAL STORIES  
of the USA's Medal-Winning  
Equestrians and Their Horses

Edited by  
NANCY  
JAFFER

THE UNITED STATES EQUESTRIAN TEAM FOUNDATION

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# LAUREN HOUGH

## The Journey to the Pink Coat



Lauren was a champion from the start. She earned numerous titles with her small pony, Swan Song, before she went on to much success in the junior hunters and equitation divisions. As a junior jumper, Lauren rode on the 1993 gold medal Zone 10 team. The next year, at age 15, she won the USET Show Jumping Talent Search Finals East and secured the title of Pacific Coast Horseman's Association Grand Prix Rookie of the Year.

Partnered with Clasiko, Lauren first rode for the U.S. Equestrian Team at the 2000 Sydney Olympics. From there, she went on to a string of successes with the American flag on her saddle pad. In 2003, Lauren represented the United States on the gold medal Pan American Games squad in the Dominican Republic. And from 2004 through 2006, Lauren was a member of successful U.S. contingents competing in the Samsung Super League, with the U.S. finishing first in 2005. Lauren was also a member of the 2007 Pan American Games bronze-medal-winning team in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

After stints on the winning Nations Cup teams in Rome, Italy, in 2009 and in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, the following year, the Wellington, Florida, resident also competed on the U.S. squad at the 2010 World Equestrian Games in Kentucky. At the Toronto Pan American Games in 2015, Lauren earned team and individual bronze medals with Ohlala.

In 2017, Lauren contributed to the Hermès U.S. show jumping teams that clinched Nations Cup gold in Sopot, Poland, Spruce Meadows, Canada, and Dublin, Ireland. In Ireland, an all-female squad earned the victory, forever marking a historic moment in equestrian sport.

Additional notable individual achievements for Lauren include winning the National Horse Show Grand Prix (twice), the Grand Prix of Ireland, and the

Saint-Lo Grand Prix in France. Lauren also earned the Leading Lady Rider Award for the 2014 Winter Equestrian Festival.

A highlight of Lauren's 2016 season was her victory in the \$130,000 Longines FEI World Cup Jumping for the President's Cup at the Washington International Horse Show, where she was leading rider. In 2017, she and Ohlala won the Great American \$1 Million at HITS Ocala.

When I was a child and someone asked me what I wanted to do with my life, I always said the same thing, "I'm going to ride in the Olympics."

I was fortunate that my father, Champ Hough, competed in the Helsinki Games in 1952 and won a team bronze medal in eventing. That was quite an inspiration for me. My first lessons were from my father and my mother, Linda Hough, a wonderful hunter rider who went on to be a sought-after judge.

I started my own business in 1998 when I was 21. I had a fantastic equestrian education. I was exposed to all the best with my family so involved in the industry that I felt ready. After putting together a syndicate, I went to Germany with Dutch trainer Henk Nooren and bought Clasiko and Windy City within 48 hours of each other on the same trip. Henk, whom I had met through Michele Grubb, helped me find all my horses throughout my career.

I told everyone in the Clasiko group that we were buying the horse so I could ride him in the Olympics. Did I believe it? Not really, but I thought it was a good selling point.

Clasiko was a beautiful horse with really good conformation. He was a powerhouse. I never sat on anything like that. When the jumps got big, he didn't even feel like he was making an effort. Although it felt as if they couldn't build the fences



Lauren Hough with her inspirational father, eventing Olympian Champ Hough, at a California horse show when she competed as a child.

big enough to stump him, it took a while to learn to go fast with him and win a Grand Prix. When I found myself struggling with Clasiko during our early days together, Henk flew to Florida to help and advised, "You have to stick with it because he has a lot of talent!"

Unfortunately, Clasiko sustained an injury in the middle of his eight-year-old year and didn't come back until he was 9. At that time, I had a student who wanted to ride in the Olympic trials, comprised of five rounds at the U.S. Equestrian Team training center in Gladstone, New Jersey, and five rounds in California. Since I would already be at the trials, I decided to enter Clasiko to give him mileage, thinking if he got in over his head, I'd simply withdraw.

I knew that I really needed a set of eyes on



Lauren Hough made the 2000 Olympic team with Clasiko after going through the selection trials without thinking she had a chance to be on the squad.



the ground for the trials. I always had the utmost respect and admiration for 1984 Olympic team gold and individual silver medalist Conrad Homfeld. At that time, he was focused on course building and had stopped training altogether. I called him in the winter of 2000 to see if he would consider helping me.

He said, "Thank you so much for asking, but I really want to give it some thought. What made you think of me?"

I told him, "I admire your calmness, and I don't want someone to come in and reinvent the wheel. I just want someone who will give me confidence and hold my hand to go through this process." At the time, of course, I wasn't thinking we would make it all the way to Sydney.

Conrad, who also won team gold and individual silver in the 1986 World Championships, did accept my invitation. He was an invaluable and instrumental part of a key time in my career, and he traveled around the world for me. Conrad never charged me a dime and wouldn't let me pay his expenses. I am eternally grateful to him.

In the middle of the Gladstone trials, I had to fly home to California to be in my cousin's wedding. It was a very quick trip, so when I returned, I was completely stressed and running late, which led to a bad round on the two-round day. Under the selection criteria, you were only allowed one drop score, and that less-than-optimum tour of the course had to be it for me.

There was a break before the final round, so I pulled myself together, took a deep breath, and went out to do what I had to do. I jumped a clean round and made the cut for the final group of 12 that went to California.

The best five from there were to go to Sydney for the Olympics, and the second group would go to Spruce Meadows in Canada for that show's Nations Cup. Competing in the second set of trials worked for me because it gave me the opportunity

to return to California, where I grew up. I also figured I'd get to be on my first Nations Cup team at Spruce Meadows, never thinking I'd qualify for the Olympic squad. I just stayed really focused and didn't have the Olympics anywhere but the back of my mind as my horse kept getting better. The last day was comprised of two rounds, and after the first round, I was in fourth place. I remember going back and sitting in the stable, reminding myself to stay calm and keep doing what I had been doing.

After jumping a clear in that last round, I galloped through the timers and threw my hands up in the air. It was like, "*Oh my God, my dream actually just came true!*"

I was in absolute shock as I walked out of the ring thinking, "*This happened!*"

Obviously, there was a lot of criticism as to whether objective selection was the right thing to do in choosing the Games team. And in my case, it meant that the first Nations Cup I ever rode in would be at the Olympics. I knew, however, despite my lack of team experience, that I couldn't be taken off the squad under the system being used at the time.

Looking back on it, I don't think I was aware of what a big deal it was. I was just living in the moment. The horses had to go directly into quarantine in California and were there for about three weeks. Like the others who would be on the team, I traveled back and forth to attend to the rest of my business on the East Coast. That's when I formed a bond with Margie Goldstein Engle and Laura Kraut, who would be on the team with me. We spent a lot of time together.

I'll never forget when my treasured "Pink" coat arrived: the scarlet jacket with the USET crest—something that could only be worn by a rider representing the U.S. team. My last horse show before I left for Sydney was the Hampton Classic, and I rode in the coat there because someone told me, "You need to wear this once before the Olympics."

# MICHELLE GIBSON

## Sending a Message for U.S. Dressage



**T**he sensational Trakehner stallion Peron picked up where 1992 U.S. Olympic dressage hero Gifted (see p. 121) left off, delivering a record high score for an American horse in the discipline as he led the team to the bronze medal in the 1996 Atlanta Olympics under the guidance of 27-year-old Michelle Gibson. In the Grand Prix, she had a better score than every rider but Germany's intrepid Isabell Werth and the Netherlands' Freestyle star Anky van Grunsven. It was a watershed performance that served notice the United States was on the rise. "This is a turning point for us," Chef d'Equipe Jessica Ranshausen said at the time.

Michelle had been touted as a possibility for the first individual Olympic dressage medal won by an American since Captain Hiram Tuttle's bronze at the 1932 Games, and she would have earned bronze if Olympic dressage had run under its usual format. But 1996 was the first Games to offer the Freestyle following the Grand Prix Special, where Michelle had been standing third, and she wound up fifth in the individual standings.

After the Olympics, Peron's owners sold him and he went back to Europe, where the son of Mahogani stood at stud and resumed his competitive career. In 1999, he had an allergic reaction to an antibiotic shot and died. He and Michelle never reunited.

Michelle has continued riding, training, and teaching. She had two national champions at Small Tour, Lex Barker and Don Angelo. Based in Colorado during the summer, Michelle and her husband, Nicolas Hernandez, spend winters in Wellington, Florida.



With their elegant style and perfect harmony, Michelle Gibson and Peron led the U.S. team to bronze at the 1996 Olympics.

I went to Germany in 1988 when I was 19, living with the family of an exchange student who had once stayed at our house in Georgia. I became a working student at the stable of noted trainer Willi Schultheis. Rudolf Zeilinger was his *bereiter* (apprentice) at the time and starting his own business. He needed help and asked if I'd be interested. That's how I ended up riding with him. I also cleaned stalls and tacked and untacked the

horses, as most working students do.

I went home after two-and-a-half years and wasn't sure what would happen next. My father had a contact at the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, so they printed a half-page article about how I had been training in Germany, and that since the Olympics were coming to Atlanta, I needed a horse. Peron's owners, Russell Webster and Carole Meyer-Webster, saw the article and called me.

Peron at that point was living in a North Georgia pasture. They asked if I'd be interested, so I said I'd come and see him.

My dad and I drove up and I tried him. Honestly, at that time, I didn't know what I was looking for or looking at. I got on him in the middle of a field and rode him around. He tried to do everything I asked him to do, so we took him home. That was the beginning of Peron and me.

I paid all the expenses for him except shoeing and veterinary bills. About nine months after I got Peron, I took him to a clinic Rudolf was doing in New Jersey, and he offered to give me my job

again. I took it, and we did fundraisers where I was based at Applewood Farm in Alpharetta, Georgia, to get the money to ship Peron to Germany.

My dad always thought I'd ride in the Olympics, and it was a longstanding joke that by the time I got to the Olympics they would be in Atlanta, so it was karma when the city won the bid for the 1996 Games. In 1994 I was back at Rudolf's, still doing chores, including cleaning stalls, but I also was riding. We started showing and as each show was successful, we went on to the next. It kind of evolved. After you do well at a couple of the big shows, you think about the Olympics and say, "Maybe it could happen." In 1995, the year before the Olympics, I showed at Aachen, Germany's most famous show, where we were placed in the top six. The two most successful dressage riders in the world, Anky van Grunsven of the Netherlands and Isabell Werth of Germany, were there. I was all wide-eyed.

The U.S. Equestrian Team had been watching me, but it was kind of new territory for everyone with me living across the Atlantic. It was late winter or early spring 1996 before we started having conversations as we looked toward the Games. We agreed on the shows in Europe and the scores I'd need to qualify for the Olympic selection trials. So then it was: How do I get myself and the horse to USET headquarters in Gladstone, New Jersey, for the competition? Even though I was working non-stop, once going for six weeks without a day off as I rode 10 or 11 horses a day, I did not have the money to pay for our trip home. I had just enough money to live on, and that was about it. My parents didn't have the kind of funds that could cover travel for Peron and me, either.

Luckily, one of the German magazines did an article about how I had the scores to be able to go to the selection trials but didn't have a way to get there. That publicity prompted Guido Klatter International Horse Transport to step up, when even Peron's owners wouldn't do it, and sponsor the trip



The 1996 Olympic dressage bronze medal team (left to right): Robert Dover, Steffen Peters, Michelle Gibson, and Guenter Seidel.

# GINA MILES

## Beating the Heat in Hong Kong



**H**elping others achieve their goals is as fulfilling as her own riding for this Olympic individual silver medal eventer, who has been teaching since she was 15 years old. She coached several competitors to medals at the North American Young Rider Championships and excels at matching new horse and rider combinations. Gina enjoys teaching Pony Clubbers at the introductory levels and adult amateurs to be safe and confident, just as much as she likes working with ambitious riders to reach the top levels of the sport.

Gina's business, Gold Medal Equestrian, is located in the Bay Area of Northern California, where it offers training for all ages in eventing, show jumping, and dressage. She has served on the U.S. Equestrian Federation's Eventing Technical Committee and the USEF Hearing Committee, is a former chairman of the U.S. Eventing Association's Professional Horsemen's Council, and has been a Pony Club national examiner and Level IV USEA certified instructor.

Gina graduated cum laude in 1997 from Cal Poly Tech, San Luis Obispo, with a degree in crop science and agricultural business. She recently was inducted into the Davis Senior High School Hall of Fame. Gina has two children, a son, Austin, and a daughter, Taylor, who also likes to event.

**T**here was a lot that was different about the 2008 Olympics. For one thing, all the sports but equestrian were held in Beijing, while we were in Hong Kong because China was unable to establish equine disease-free zones on the mainland. For another, it was only the second time Olympic eventing had been staged in the short format without the speed and endurance

sections of roads and tracks and steeplechase. The 2004 Athens Games, the first in the short format, got a lot of criticism for being too "soft." And of course, it was my first time riding in the Olympics, which meant it was all new and exciting—especially in typhoon season, when we were going to be dealing with a lot of heat and humidity.

While the dressage and show jumping segments



“The amount of pressure was unbelievable” during the individual show jumping phase at the Olympics in Hong Kong, but Gina Miles and McKinlaigh handled it to win the individual silver.

were held at the Hong Kong Jockey Club's Sha Tin racetrack, the cross-country was an hour each way at the Beas River Country Club and part of the Hong Kong Golf Club in Fanling, so the time we took walking cross-country was pretty involved. Course designer Michael Etherington-Smith had a challenge building his route on a teeny piece of land. The whole team walked the course six times, figuring out exactly what we wanted our track to be. You had to be so precise and know every inch of every piece of ground.

It was hard to figure how horses would recover without having those long galloping stretches found on most cross-country courses. It ended up riding like a slalom course, and no one made the eight-minute optimum time, which was a record in terms of how short it was. But it was the same number of jumping efforts as we would have



Gina Miles grew up in Pony Club, “riding anything I could find” a work ethic that got her the opportunity to wear the U.S. Equestrian Team’s scarlet coat and wind up on the medal podium at the Olympics.

had with a 10-minute optimum time. Since I was tenth after dressage, the pressure was really on for cross-country if I were going to improve my position. Being able to finish with no jumping penalties and only 16.8 time penalties moved me up to fifth, but it wasn’t easy.

I wound up in a difficult position because our pathfinder, Amy Tryon, had an uncharacteristic fall early in the course and couldn’t continue. Going second, that left me as the pathfinder, so I was a bit more conservative than I might have been had Amy been able to finish. With the need for accuracy and the angled questions on course, I took a little more time to get it done.

I was on McKinlaigh, a 14-year-old, Irish-bred horse by Highland King, who I owned with Thom Schulz and Laura Coats. He had a huge stride and was incredibly rideable. He could make his big self very small. McKinlaigh didn’t look as if he was going fast, but his was one of the fastest times of the day. I had a great advantage because I never had to pull to set him up for a jump; you waste so much time when you’re pulling on a horse. I always trained him using a heart rate monitor, so I knew he was very fit. The cool thing about eventing is that you spend so much time conditioning and training your horses that you know them inside and out.

The competition started at 8:00 a.m. to avoid the hottest and most humid weather. As it turned out, we were lucky, because it was one of the coolest days of the Hong Kong portion of the Olympics, with rain coming only after cross-country was finished. To cope with the weather, we took advantage of misting machines, which had first been used at the Atlanta Olympics.

At the racetrack, there were shade pens and fans by every arena, even the cross-country schooling arena. Because of the horse racing, the equestrian facilities were incredible. We were able to use the barns at the racetrack because there was no

# JIMMY FAIRCLOUGH

## I Have Determination



The realization of a lifetime dream came 40 years after Jimmy started training for the inaugural world four-in-hand driving championship. As the United States claimed its first four-in-hand World Championships gold medal in 2018, he stood on the podium at the FEI World Equestrian Games with teammates Misdee Wrigley-Miller and Chester Weber, who had trained with him as a teen.

Jimmy's WEG marathon—where he had the disadvantage of being first on course—and cones scores both counted toward the team total. His propensity for coming through was illustrated in the cones segment, where he struggled with a control problem after one of his horse's nosebands broke. It had to be fixed with a zip tie when the teams were called back to the arena for the presentation.

No stranger to gold medals, Jimmy was on the 1991 winning pairs World Championships driving team. The victory gave the United States the right to host the 1993 World Pairs Championships in Gladstone, New Jersey, where it was deemed one of the most successful competitions of its kind ever held.

Jimmy has participated in more World Championships than any other U.S. driver. A national pairs and four-in-hand champion multiple times, he also has served both the USET and the U.S. Equestrian Federation in driving governance roles. Following the 2018 WEG, he decided to semi-retire and confine his competition to the United States. While he wasn't going to give up driving, he had no plans to pursue another World Championship abroad.

The president of his family's fuel company, Jimmy follows his equestrian interests at Top Brass Farm in Sussex County, New Jersey. He has two sons—Ryan, an arena construction specialist, and James II, a professional hunter/jumper trainer and rider.





Jimmy Fairclough was the pathfinder on the marathon course at the 2018 FEI World Equestrian Games.

As a kid, I rode ponies, jumpers, hunters, and also drove. My father was driving a four-in-hand, so even before I entered my teens, I started driving a four-in-hand with pleasure vehicles and a coach. I drove that coach around the Wanamaker Oval at the Devon Horse Show when I was 12 years old.

Combined driving made its appearance in the United States during the 1970s. In 1970, Phil Hofmann, a four-in-hand driver who was the father of show jumpers Carol Thompson and Judy Richter, put on the first U.S. FEI driving competition in Johnson Park, just outside the small city of New Brunswick, New Jersey.

My father won that competition. But afterward, he told me, "I'm not going to do this. It's too much work." He was running the family fuel business and despite his interest in driving, just didn't have the time to devote to it. In the autumn of 1978, I drove his horses at the Myopia event in Massachusetts and realized it was a lot more fun than riding a balky pony. One of the people against whom I competed at Myopia was German driver Emil Jung. I had beaten the other Americans at Myopia by a large margin, but Emil was ahead of me by 60 points.

In 1979, I started trying to qualify for the first world four-in-hand championships. Later that



In the cones segment at the 2018 WEG, Jimmy Fairclough had a tough time after the noseband on a horse's bridle broke, but he persisted and triumphed in his 40-year quest to earn a team gold medal for the United States.

# LYNN SEIDEMANN

## I Felt I Was Whole Again



Lynn became a paraplegic when a 1983 snow skiing accident left her with no feeling or function from the navel down. Starting her riding experience with two side-walkers and a leader, she became an independent rider by 1998. Lynn competed at the National Horse Show in St. Louis, Missouri, where she won the high point award for her division and earned the highest dressage score of the show. That was the impetus for the start of her international career.

The mother of two, Nick and Jena, Lynn has been very active in sports throughout her life, competing not only in dressage, but also in wheelchair basketball and wheelchair tennis doubles, winning silver at the 1992 Paralympic Games in Barcelona, Spain. After she switched sports, she won silver in the Grade I Individual Dressage Freestyle at the 2004 Paralympics in Athens. In the 2003 World Championships in Belgium, she took gold in the Championships test, and silver in the Freestyle.

The 2008 Paralympics in Hong Kong marked the fourth and final Games of Lynn's career and her third as an equestrian. She has served on the U.S. Equestrian Federation high performance and selection committees. Lynn, the USEF's 2007 Para-Equestrian National Champion, also was the vice president of the U.S. Para-Equestrian Association.

The Florida resident has trained a mini-horse to do therapeutic driving and hopes to focus more on that, or driving for the disabled, when she retires from her job as an information technology specialist.



The 2008 Paralympics in Hong Kong was the third and final equestrian Paralympics competition for Lynn Seidemann.

When you have an accident you're just thinking about how to survive. The first year or so is spent trying to find other people with the same issues and seeing how they are dealing with it.

It kind of threw me back into sports, which was my orientation from the days when I played soccer for the University of Cincinnati and dreamed of being a professional soccer player. Those I met after my accident would say, "Try this, try that." It helped me adjust to life in general by being around other people who were just trying to be athletes.

I knew I needed sports in my life and having been an athlete, I wondered, "How can I still do that?" I started off with basketball and then tennis. I went to the Paralympic Games in 1992 for wheelchair tennis and won team silver.

Tennis was a pretty huge strain on my body, however. So after '92, I thought I was retiring. But I loved being physical. I feel you need to be active and doing things, or you're not really living. I needed opportunities to keep me active. I couldn't just join a local basketball club or whatever.

I was looking for something that would give me strength in my stomach, sitting straight in my chair, help me keep continuing to work, and help me feel like I'm really a part of life. For me, it's mentally necessary to keep going and doing things. Then I heard about a therapeutic riding barn called Equest in Wylie, Texas, for disabled people. "They can't be putting people in wheelchairs on horses," I figured.

Through research, I found riding helps strengthen the abdominal muscles. When you're pushing in a wheelchair, you're always pushing forward, and it rounds your shoulders. Horseback riding involves always sitting straight, with your shoulders back. It encourages really good posture. So I thought I'd try it to see if it helped me keep active. I was not a horse person at all, and the first time I rode, I was stiff as a board afterward. I was



Lynn Seidemann on Phoenix at the 2003 World Championships. "The more I got into it, the more I liked it," she said of her experience with riding after becoming a paraplegic in a 1983 snow skiing accident.

like, "Oh, my gosh. This is the hardest thing I've ever done, and it can't be helping me out." Then it became a challenge. I saw another lady in a wheelchair who loved it and told me it relaxed her. Really? "Yes."

As soon as I did relax, it was so much easier. It started making me sit straighter and helped my stomach muscles. I loved being around the barn, the smell, taking care of animals. The more I got into it, the more I liked it.

When you compete, it gives you the goal to keep in better shape, to make the effort to be the best you can. I guess it's that challenge, "Can I do the next step? What's the limit of the capabilities I have right now?" This barn was promoting doing more. They started taking me to competitions. When I started with dressage, it was on a borrowed horse. I actually trained with one specific horse, a little Dutch Warmblood, Hershey, who was just right for me. I leased him from a therapeutic barn. Hershey wasn't too tall, I could keep my balance—he was perfect.

I borrowed a horse named Miss Jane Marple in 1999 to compete in the qualifiers for the 2000

# SHAWN FLARIDA

## Solid Gold



After graduating from high school in 1988, Shawn went to work for his brother, Mike Flarida, a well-known reining trainer, then went out on his own six months later.

“I had eight clients. I barely eked out a living, but I never doubted it was what I was meant to do,” he recalled. His talent and hard work paid off over the years as he went on to become the National Reining Horse Association’s first-ever \$6 million rider and its all-time leading money earner.

Shawn has won nothing but gold medals in the FEI World Equestrian Games. He began in 2002 in Jerez, Spain, when reining made its first appearance at the WEG. Shawn earned team and individual gold there with San Jo Freckles.

Eight years later, the Ohio-based reiner was on the gold medal team aboard RC Fancy Step during the first WEG in the United States at the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington. In 2014, Shawn again traveled overseas to the World Championships, leading the team to gold and taking individual gold in Normandy, France, with a WEG scoring record on Spooks Gotta Whiz, the NRHA Open Futurity winner.

Domestically, he has six NRHA Open Futurity championships to his name and is an 11-time winner of the All-American Quarter Horse Congress futurity.

Shawn and his high school sweetheart Michele, who handles the administrative part of his business, have three children, Cody, Courtney, and Sam.

All I wanted to do was train horses, for as long as I can remember. I came home from school one day in second grade and decided that I had had enough. I didn't see any point to learning anything more when I could spend my time a lot better in the barn.

Horses have always been around my family. My father, Bill, worked as a welder, but he had horses since he was 10 years old. He bought his first horse for \$15. He and my mother, Betty, were the Ohio Quarter Horse youth team guidance people for 30 years. Even though reining wasn't very popular during the 1960s and the early '70s, my father liked reining horses. He appreciated a horse

that was physical and could turn on its butt and was kind of quick.

Of course, I lived in Ohio, which is where reining originated, right there in Findlay. So it seemed fitting that I would be involved in reining, along with everyone else in the family. My brother Mike, a two-time NRHA Futurity winner, is a very successful reiner, and my other brother, Mark, is my farrier.

We have a 75-acre farm and about 50 to 60 head of horses. We have some broodmares, but it's primarily a training facility with a lot of young horses we are trying to train up and get going. My wife, Michele, takes care of the business and gets me where I'm supposed to be. I wouldn't trade jobs with her. She's also busy with the Buckeye Reiners, the Ohio Quarter Horse Association Congress, and several NRHA Committees. Then throw in several horse shows a month and a 40-stall training barn—it's hard to figure out how she manages it all. But she does.

My family is the most important thing in my life, and I know I wouldn't be where I am today if it weren't for the love and support of my wife as well. She's sacrificed a lot for me and my career.

Being able to compete in the World Equestrian Games was an important milestone. When I was on the first gold medal team in Jerez, Spain, in 2002, that was the first time I got to go out of the country and compete for the United States. I got to ride San Jo Freckles, a horse I had trained up since he was two.

It was an unbelievable feeling and an unbelievable experience to win two gold medals there. The opportunities that brought me were astronomical. On a personal level, as far as sponsors, it



Shawn Florida's first double gold WEG experience in 2002 brought him "astronomical" opportunities that built to him repeating the feat at the 2014 WEG.

# MARGARET "MAGGY" PRICE

1932-2007

## True Grit



When Maggy Price set out to do something, it got done. She was a transformative president of the American Endurance Ride Conference from 1990 to 1992, one of those larger-than-life people who make a difference in their sport. She fought for what she believed was right. Totally devoted to the discipline of endurance, Maggy worked to ensure it got the kind of worldwide recognition and inclusion she firmly believed it deserved.

A 1992 FEI World Endurance Championship team silver medalist (Ramegwa Kanavyann) who also took the individual bronze, Maggy was instrumental in the development of international endurance in the United States.

Maggy, who was inducted into the AERC Hall of Fame in 1994, is honored with The Maggy Price Endurance Excellence Award, presented annually during the U.S. Equestrian Federation convention to the top senior rider. The award is sponsored by Gold Medal Farm and Larry and Valerie Kanavy, in memory of Maggy.





*(Left to right):* Deborah La Berge, Maggy Price, Becky Hart, and Suzanne Hayes at the World Championships in 1992 in Barcelona, Spain.

“**M**aggy was class, without a question,” said Mike Tomlinson, a former AERC president, citing “her ethics and her character.” Maggy also had a unique style and never let down her standards of appearance.

“She’s the only one who kept a southern drawl, even though she had left the South when she was a little child,” he remembered with a chuckle. “She would stop right before she got to the finish line of a 100-mile ride to put on lipstick and do her hair. She always looked perfect.” More important, he said, “She cared about the horses, the people, and the sport. It is because of her almost single-handedly that we (endurance) are in the FEI.”

Originally, he said, the United States was not going to be involved with FEI endurance, because AERC did not want to be part of the international scene and said “No” when the FEI asked to use its rules. The FEI then decided it would use the European Long Distance Riding organization’s rules.

“Maggy said no, the United States must lead. She got us involved. She was amazing.”

One of her goals was to get the U.S. Equestrian Team to accept endurance among its disciplines. She achieved that, and it made things so much better for team riders.

“In 1992, riders paid their own way to the World Championships,” remembered another former AERC president, Stagg Newman. “In 1994, that was the first year USET paid our expenses, due to her efforts. Her proposal to USET was, ‘You bring us the money, we’ll bring you the medals.’ In the first six endurance World Championships, the individual gold belonged to Americans,” he noted, and at the 1994 FEI World Equestrian Games, the only U.S. gold medal was in endurance.

The USET leadership in the early 1990s was formidable and imposing, not easily swayed. But former USET Executive Director Bob Standish recalled, “Maggy stood up to all of them and was supportive of her discipline when they were



**Maggy Price was so proud of her team silver medal from the 1992 World Championships that she liked to wear a T-shirt proclaiming the achievement.**

allocating dollars. She fought for every penny she did get for that discipline. She was totally dedicated to her sport and very well-respected.”

At the same time, “Maggy was a total character, warm and friendly, not afraid to get her nails dirty as long as she had her lipstick on,” reminisced three-time endurance world champion, Becky Hart. “She was so proud of the team silver medal she won in Spain. She had a sweatshirt made that said, ‘Ask me about my grandchildren,’ but ‘grandchildren’ was crossed out and instead, it said ‘silver medal.’”

Valerie Kanavy, the 1994 and 1998 endurance world champion, called Maggy, “a real lady. She was a southern belle, a thinker, and a doer. She got things done and she didn’t put up with any stuff from anybody.

“She started off in competitive trail riding and ended up going into endurance,” said Val, noting Maggy had done some horse showing before

# KERITH LEMON

## Paving the Way with Silver



A nine-time national vaulting champion and three-time individual silver medalist at the World Championships, Kerith was instrumental in gaining new worldwide respect for American vaulting with her achievements.

She has a degree in mass communications from the University of California at Berkeley and works as a commercial and film director. The artistry that was her trademark during her vaulting career has been a good fit with her directing efforts.

Kerith, who runs her own production company and has provided color commentary at international vaulting events, also has served as a trustee of the USET Foundation.

She does a lot of traveling for work, “not unlike my life when I was in vaulting,” she observed, but home is Washington D.C., where Kerith lives with her husband, Mike Gugat, and their son.

By the time I was seven, I had tried all the different sports available to kids my age, yet nothing caught my attention. Gymnastics, for instance, moved too slowly for me.

I really loved ponies, but we lived in Santa Cruz, California, which wasn't horse country. Besides, having my own horse was never an option financially. But my mother had a friend whose kids did vaulting with Nancy Stevens-Brown at the Timberline Club. When we checked out the classes, my mom gave me the option of vaulting or Girl Scouts.

It was an easy choice: I didn't want to wear the green Girl Scouts' outfit and look like everybody else. That foreshadowed my future. I made all of the road-less-traveled choices along my path and vaulting was probably the biggest one for me.

We got to Timberline just as one of the older canter teams was bringing the horse down from the arena. They ran right up to us and somebody took me over to a barrel. Within minutes, I had already learned some of the compulsory moves. Because the learning curve was so high and offered

a challenge, it grabbed me right away. For my first actual lesson, I immediately was able to stand on the horse.

The next day, I ran around my school telling everybody I was doing vaulting, this thing no one else knew about or nobody else was doing. It was nice to be distinguished from my friends who were doing traditional sports. I liked that about it. That goes with my name, Kerith, being pretty unique. And I was always up for adventure and discovery.

I was an athletic kid, putting on dance performances in the living room or teaching myself cartwheels in the backyard. I was always on the move. The thing we all loved about vaulting was that it was so family-oriented. My whole family would go when we went to competitions. After I started training in Europe, my brother and sister would come along and live with German families while I was over there.

What's so special about the vaulting community beyond the club you're with is that you interact with everyone else. There was a larger camaraderie in the sport than I'd experienced in others. We were borrowing horses for competitions, and you would often see vaulters from two countries using the same horse. Vaulting always felt like an even playing field to me, and having an equine partner gave the sport an element of the unknown; everyone had the same chance of the horse spooking or taking a misstep.

I rose quickly through the ranks after spending only one year working at the trot. I moved up to the B team at the canter because I was little and could be a flyer on the other vaulters' shoulders. The next year, I was on the A team. We hosted some of the German vaulters when I was nine, so I understood the idea of competing at a higher level. Germany dominated the sport.

My interest was piqued by meeting new people and getting to travel. When the first team went to Europe in 1986 to train for the World



Even as a small child, Kerith Lemon was showing gymnastic prowess.



In 1983, little Kerith Lemon already was comfortable in the basic seat for vaulting on Narah.

Championships, I wanted to be on that squad and wear the USA uniform. I associated it with the Olympics (even though vaulting is not in the Olympics), because I loved to watch the Games on TV.

When my opportunity came for a spot on the U.S. team in 1990 at the first FEI World Equestrian Games in Stockholm, vaulting already was my life. I was in middle school, but I was bypassing birthday parties and extracurricular activities to go to