

Cowgirl WISDOM

**Three successful
women share insights
on horses and hard work.**

By Holly Clanahan



GUMPTION AND GRIT. DETERMINATION AND DRIVE.

Those are just a few of the things that define a cowgirl. The National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame in Fort Worth, Texas, is accepting nominations for its 2011 class of inductees. To help publicize that quest, we thought it'd be worth looking back at some past inductees. (And, truthfully, it was a good excuse to interview these amazingly strong, talented women who are also a big part of the American Quarter Horse landscape.)

As they've written their own life stories, we'll let our featured cowgirl hall of famers tell their stories in their own words:

Carol Rose, Gainesville, Texas

SHE IS AQHA'S ALL-TIME LEADING BREEDER OF performance horses, and she has long been a trail blazer. In 1967, she became the first woman to win a National Cutting Horse Association non-pro world championship, she was the first woman to compete at the NCHA Futurity and was the first woman to be on the AQHA Judges Committee. She is a member of the American Quarter Horse Hall of Fame and has been associated with a number of horses who've also been inducted there. You can read more about Carol's considerable accomplishments at www.carolrose.com/biography.html.

How do you define the term "cowgirl"?

"Somebody that can saddle her own horse.

"A cowgirl, to me, is a term used for somebody who has devoted her life to the western heritage and to the western way of doing things, whether it be in art or music or rodeo or horse showing or ranching. It doesn't necessarily mean that she gets dirty or gets mud on her pants every day ... but it's physical labor along with mental labor. You don't get there by just standing around. You don't get to be the best at what you do unless you've been doing it for a long, long time."

What's the biggest risk you ever took in your life?

"The biggest risk I've ever taken was when I was married to Matlock Rose, and we got a divorce. I'm not a native Texan, my family's not in Texas, and I made the decision to stay right there where I was in Gainesville, Texas, and continue on in the horse business with nothing changing, other than I didn't have a husband anymore. That's the biggest risk I ever took in my life, but it worked for me. I always knew I could do it. It wasn't even a thought in my mind that I couldn't."

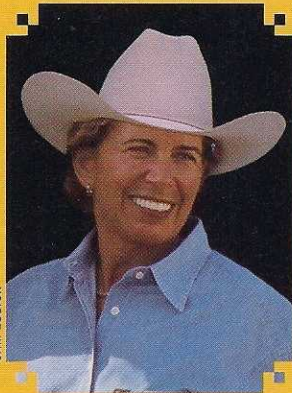
What's your philosophy on risk-taking?

"You've got to, because you can't get where you want to go unless you try things. And if you just sit around and wait for something to happen, it's not going to. You've got to make it happen, that's my philosophy.

"I never necessarily had a goal, I just wanted to be the best

I could be, and I wanted to raise the very best horses I could possibly raise, and I wanted to have really pretty horses with good conformation that were great performers.

"That's something that most of the performance people didn't really care about, the looks or the conformation, and I was dead set on it. I pretty much feel like I changed the way performance horses look, with the kind of horses I raise."



CAM ESSICK



Carol Rose and Shining Spark

CAM ESSICK

You've been associated with so many great horses ... which one has been your favorite?

"Without a doubt, Shining Spark (a horse she bred who won an AQHA world championship in junior reining and the National Reining Horse Association Derby before moving on to a successful career at stud). He's the greatest horse I've ever had my hands on. He has been that way since he was born. He's smart. He has been good-minded, easy to teach. He wants to learn, and he's pleasant to be around, and he never has given us an ounce of trouble. He's a great sire. His daughters are fabulous, his sons are fabulous, and he's fabulous.

"I've been so lucky to have him, and between the two of us, we've promoted each other. He has helped me get to a point where I never believed I'd be, and I've helped him become as famous as he is, so together, we've given each other notoriety."

What advice would you give to young women who are hoping to find themselves a future in the horse industry?

"Work hard and don't ever give up. If you have hardships, just keep believing that you can do it. One of my philosophies is, when the going gets tough, the tough get going. And I think I fit that category."

On finding mentors: "It isn't only what you know, it's who you know. Because it takes *who* you know to teach you *what* you need to know.

"Since I was 5 years old, I've had the best help anybody could possibly have, from the leading people in the industry, and I'm still learning things today. I've learned from the greatest, and I'm still learning. It has been a good ride, I can promise you."

Terry Stuart Forst, Waurika, Oklahoma

SHE IS THE FIFTH GENERATION OF HER FAMILY MANAGING WHAT is the oldest ranch in Oklahoma under continuous family ownership, having been carved out of Indian Territory in 1868. The Stuart Ranch won the AQHA-Pfizer Best Remuda Award in 1995, recognizing its excellent ranch-horse breeding program. And in 2004, the ranch's stallion, Real Gun, was named the AQHA Superhorse, the equivalent of an MVP award at the AQHA World Championship Show. Terry is president of the Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association, the first woman to hold that post. Read more at www.stuartranch.com.

What's the biggest risk you ever took in your life?

"There was a day in 1989 when my dad and I had a big disagreement. It had been brewing over some time, and there were several things that were causing it. I chose to leave the ranch. I really was giving up my job, my home, leaving my family and not knowing exactly where I was headed. But somehow, it seemed like the right thing to do. Probably in hindsight, it was one of the better decisions I ever made.

"After I left the ranch that day, my boys, Robert and Clay, and I moved nine times in seven years. We had a lot of things that happened, good and bad. During this time, I attended Texas Christian University ranch management school, and the boys' dad died, and lots of challenges appeared. I had gotten a real estate license and was prepared to work in real estate doing rural appraisals and preparing management plans for prospective buyers.

"My dad called me about a property and asked me to do a management plan for him. After I presented it to him, he offered me the job to run the entire operation. I accepted with the stipulation that if I was not able to achieve the outlined goals and put the ranch in a profitable position, I would resign. I was that confident that I could do it. I was going to make it work, no matter what. I had a plan, and I had enough confidence in myself at that point in time, I knew I could do it, and I wasn't going to stay if I couldn't.

"A family operation can be a very tough job. There is always an emotional bond that no other job has. When your family has survived in an operation for as long as mine has (since 1868), I certainly did not want to be the one to let my dad and family down."

What's your philosophy on risk-taking?

"A whole lot different today than it would have been the day I left the ranch. I think when you have hit bottom, for

lack of a better description, you know you can get out. You know you can get up. You know it's OK. And so then the adversities and challenges of life become things that you know, with enough determination and hard work, you can get through them.

"I think we all need to step out of our comfort zone and find out what we are made of. I feel like God puts adversities and challenges in our life to develop and hone us. In hindsight, for me, the hardships probably have brought me to where I am today. I feel like the key to all of it is to not give up, to have faith and persevere."

You've been associated with so many great horses ... which one has been your favorite?

"I probably would say my namesake, Miss T Stuart (a 1961 dun mare by Breezy Buck). If you look at her offspring and what she did, she had 20 colts in 21 years. She is in the pedigrees of Dun It Big, Nic It In The Bud, Genuine Redbud and Genuine Hombre.

"She was the dam of Seven S Margarita, who was a tremendous mare for us. If you research 'Miss T,' there are pages and pages of what not only her daughters did, but then her granddaughters and now great-granddaughters. And she was just a ranch mare, pasture-bred her whole life to our stallion Son O Leo.

"I picked her out as a baby and wanted to name her 'Misty' after the Marguerite Henry book, 'Misty of Chincoteague.' And my dad would not let me do that, so he got creative and named her.

"We just got through showing another mare in the roping and cowhorse, Seven S Babe. We call her 'Summer.' She was really a pretty special mare to me. I was reserve world champion National Reined Cow Horse Association non-pro bridle on her and made the amateur cow horse finals at the AQHA World Show. One year (at the World Show), there were four

horses that made the finals in both the senior heading and heeling; she was one of them. She was just always there — maybe not the best, but you always got a check. And a good ranch horse. If you wanted to go get something done, you went and got Summer. My son Robert was reserve champion in the Battle in the Saddle ranch remuda class on her colt Seven S Holy Roller last year.

"And you have to mention Real Gun. He's pretty special, too. We have been very blessed to have him.

"We've been really blessed. I told somebody one time, my favorite one was my next one. We've always tried to show what we've raised. When you do win something, that makes it even more special."



Terry Stuart Forst



JIM LENNINGS

Lindy Burch, Weatherford, Texas

SHE BEGAN MAKING HISTORY IN 1979, when she became the first woman to win a reserve open championship at the NCHA Futurity. The following year, she became the first woman to win the Futurity. She and her home-grown mare, Bet Yer Blue Boons, hold the record for the highest score at the NCHA Open World Finals, and in 2000, the pair won the NCHA open world championship, making Lindy the first woman to do so. She also served as the first female president of NCHA. Learn more at www.lindyburch.com.



Lindy Burch

How do you define the term "cowgirl"?

"When I think of a cowgirl, I think of a woman who is a horseman, an A-type personality, meaning that she's independent, pretty much self sufficient and practices the golden rule. Really kind of a salt-of-the-earth person. Most of the time, she knows how to work cattle and knows how to ride a horse in a good way. That's the basic definition. And now to expand on that, I think a woman can have a cowgirl attitude who maybe does not ride and hasn't grown up on a ranch but yet shows many of the same characteristics. She's a hard worker, she's persistent, she's always looking at the glass as half full, not half empty. She's a competitor, whether she's competing in life to be as healthy as she can or be the best she can in her chosen field or the best wife in the world, the best mother in the world. If somebody asked, 'Can you do this?' she'd say, 'I'll give it my best try. I'll give it a full-court press.' That's, to me, the cowgirl attitude."

What advice would you give to young women who are hoping to find themselves a future in the horse industry?

"They have to be willing to work for it. I remember my parents, especially my dad, saying, 'If anything's worth anything, it's worth working for. Sometimes the best things that come to you are the hardest to achieve.' That has always been a motto of mine.

"In the summers, I start at 3 a.m., and in the winters, I'm out there when it's 9 degrees. I have a body suit, but I'm out there working my 2-year-olds and 3-year-olds.

"I think it has to be your No. 1 priority. For me, it always was. Now, there are other women who show, but it will be hard for them to achieve the ultimate success if they have too many other irons in the fire, like a family and kids. If you've got too many irons in the fire, you really get stretched kind of thin when you compete against somebody who doesn't have to do that.

"To be the top of the field whether you're a man or a woman, you have to be open to criticism, you have to constructively criticize everything you do on a horse and

NOMINATE A COWGIRL

Her face bears the lines of determination. Her eyes reflect the wisdom of life's experience. Her hands bear the marks of days well lived. Her bearing sends a message of confidence and fortitude. She is a National Cowgirl Museum Hall of Fame honoree.

Do you know her?

The National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame is now accepting nominations for hall of fame inductees. Nominations must be received by August 15 to be considered for the following year.

The cowgirl hall of fame celebrates women, from the 19th century to the present, whose lives exemplify the courage, resilience and independence that helped shape the American West, and fosters an appreciation of the ideals and spirit of self-reliance they inspire. It includes artists and writers, champions and competitive performers, entertainers, ranchers, trailblazers and pioneers. More than 200 extraordinary women have been inducted into the National Cowgirl Hall of Fame since 1975.

To download a copy of the nomination form or for more information, go to www.cowgirl.net.

when you're showing, if you want to get better. I'm a pretty good tennis player, but I didn't get to be a good tennis player by playing somebody who was of the same skill I was. I always wanted to play somebody who was better than me so I could rise to the occasion and learn something from them and then beat them. Then that's an accomplishment.

"You can't be afraid to lose, and you can't be afraid to win.

You've got to step up. There's a lot of trial and error, and I think the best piece of advice I can give is when something does go wrong, whatever it is, whether it's at home training or showing, first look to yourself. What you could have done to make it better? My blame always goes on me first, not my horse, not the judge, not my help and not the cow I cut. I think that has helped me, more than anything, get better. I've been criticized a lot for being so hard on myself, but I think

any champion is, whether you're Michael Jordan shooting baskets or Peyton Manning throwing footballs and going home and studying the playbooks again and again and again and again, trying to find a weakness.

"If you're not willing to put that kind of time and sacrifice in, then you can't expect to be the best." ■

Want more cowgirl wisdom? Visit americashorsedaily.com/cowgirl-wisdom to hear Lindy talk about her relationship with the great cutting mare Bet Yer Blue Boons; see what advice Carol gives her trainers about moving too fast with a horse; and find out what happened to Terry at 3 months old that shaped the rest of her life. These great ladies are also featured in the June issue of Journal Plus, the digital magazine for subscribers of The American Quarter Horse Journal.

The National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame is offering AQHA members a great deal this summer. Visit the Fort Worth museum between now and August 31, show your AQHA membership card and get \$2 off museum admission!