

## **Susan Krabbenhoft Simmers**

### **2019 NDQHA Hall of Fame Inductee**

Susan Krabbenhoft was born on December 10, 1952 in Fargo, North Dakota. She grew up in Northwood and graduated from Northwood High School in 1970. Susan was a cheerleader, a lifeguard, and an accomplished horsewoman.

For three decades, during the 1960s, 70s, and 80s, the Krabbenhoft family name was synonymous with great American Quarter Horses. Susan and her sister Pam showed their horses throughout the Midwest, and Chester Krabbenhoft, the patriarch, was well known for breeding outstanding mares to some of the best stallions in the United States. Chester was also instrumental in establishing the North Dakota Quarter Horse Association. His signature appears on the 1969 Articles of Incorporation.

As a youth, Susan was best known for competing with her mare, Poco Viva, a 1964 granddaughter by AQHA Hall of Fame stallion, Poco Bueno. They began their show career together in 1968, earning an AQHA Youth Championship in 1969 and an AQHA Open Championship in 1970. Poco Viva truly was an all-around horse, earning points in western and English events, as well as halter.

In 1970 the American Junior Quarter Horse Association was established, and in 1971 Susan campaigned for the National High Point All-Around Youth Award. She and Poco Viva crisscrossed the country earning hundreds of AQHA points, numerous Grand Champion Halter and All-Around trophies, and a Superior Showmanship Award. That year she was also one of the first individuals in the country to earn the coveted Youth Supreme Championship Award. Susan ended her campaign at the All-American Quarter Horse Congress in Columbus, Ohio placing fifth out of fifty-seven exhibitors in the youth showmanship class. Susan was a fierce competitor, but she was always personable, gracious and humble, earning her the respect and admiration of her equestrian peers and their families throughout the country.

Although Susan and Poco Viva were most comfortable in the show arena, they demonstrated they could successfully crossover to the rodeo arena. In 1970 North Dakota hosted the National High School Rodeo Finals in West Fargo. Prior to that, Susan had been named the North Dakota High School Rodeo Queen, and she and Poco Viva qualified to compete in Pole Bending. With the assistance of individuals like Dorvan Solberg, Don Taylor, and Earl Northrup, she also competed in Girls' Cutting. With grace and poise Susan proudly

and successfully represented North Dakota at the biggest high school rodeo event in the country.

Susan went on to attend North Dakota State University and compete on its rodeo team. She was a member of Kappa Kappa Gamma Sorority and a football cheerleader. It was at NDSU that she met her future husband and the love of her life, Pat Simmers, an outstanding football player for the Bison. Susan again crisscrossed the country, this time as the wife of a Division I football coach. They lived in Wisconsin, Oklahoma, and Texas, before eventually making their way back to North Dakota. Susan and Pat raised three incredible sons who all played football and graduated from NDSU with Mechanical Engineering Degrees.

In her late twenties, Susan was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. This was devastating news for the active, busy mother of three. However, with the same grit and determination she demonstrated with horses, Susan met the challenge head-on. MS may have limited many of Susan's activities, including horseback riding, but she never lost her interest or enthusiasm for Quarter Horses. Susan and her family are active members of the Fargo-Moorhead Multiple Sclerosis Society and participate in Walk MS as *Team Susie's Soldiers*. Over the years, the team has raised funds for groundbreaking research and life-changing services for those affected by multiple sclerosis. Susan serves as an inspiration to all, and she continues to earn the respect and admiration of those who know and love her.