

1998 HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE

MAX McTAGGART

The Australian Quarter Horse Association honours Max McTaggart with induction into the Hall of Fame.



Max McTaggart was born into the famous McTaggart rodeo family of Goondiwindi, Queensland. His father, Hilton, was a horse trader, drover and contract musterer. His mother, Mabel, was the daughter of a teamster.

Max's horsemanship skills were learnt from an early age as his father had 112 horses, including two stallions with brood mares and he didn't own a piece of ground. There would be 30 to 40 horses in a droving plant at a time and yards were a luxury they didn't have. Some of the horses Max broke in on stations were eight to 10 years old.

When Max saw the first four imported King Ranch stallions at Warwick, he particularly liked "Mescal" and "Gold Standard" and thought they would all cross well to station mares as some of the horses were being bred too light for bush work. He couldn't wait to ride and train one for himself.

The first was "Quarter Elgrando" and many others followed after him. Max purchased Elgrando at the age of 13 months and broke him in at 14 months. He then spent 22 months on the road with sheep. This unique partnership showed together for many years in all eastern States promoting the equine skills and versatility of the Quarter Horse. At a Quarter Horse Show at Penrith in 1973, "Quarter Elgrando" won the \$1,000 Open Reining and, at the same show, his three year old daughter "Elamo" won the \$1,000 Open Cutting.

Max bought "Mr War Cutter" (Imp) and "Hank Man Leo" (Imp) both of whom he trained and showed in the cutting pen. They had ability to burn which they passed on to their progeny. He still owns "Hank Man Leo" who is 23 and breeding well for his age.

Max McTaggart was the first Quarter Horse trainer to go out on his own training for the public from his base of 55 acres in the Lurg Hills near Benalla, Victoria. He was droving sheep in the area with his wife, Norma and young daughter Cheryl, when they discovered the picturesque spot. Many outstanding Quarter Horses have been bred there with the "Elgrando" prefix and carrying "bulls head" brands on their hips.

Max is a born communicator and loves to teach people of all ages. His work and support for AQHA Youth is legendary. If his Youth riders didn't have a horse to show, he mounted them on his cutting horses for the Youth classes.

Several of Max's students have gone on to become trainers themselves and he is very proud of their achievements. Max is now retired from public training. In spite of major surgery for prostate cancer he still rides horses for "Bangtail", breeds Quarters Horses and does what his own teacher and mentor, the late Pine Johnson of Texas, told him to be sure to do.....pass his knowledge on to others.

Max is a past AQHA Board Director and held AQHA Judge No. 1 badge (he still has the badge).

His other achievements include:-

- 1978 Carnation Quarter Horseman of the Year
- 1978 AQHA Senior Cutting Champion on “Mr War Cutter”.
- 1979 AQHA Senior Cutting Champion on “Mr War Cutter”.
- All Max’s stallions have been listed AQHA Leading Sires in various categories.
- 1979 Coach for first AQHA Youth World Cup team to go overseas to Washington State, USA.
- VQHA Living Legend Award.
- Winner of VQHA Cutters Invitational on “Elgrando Bobby H”.
- Past NCHA Judge and is an NCHA Riders Hall of Fame inductee.
- Six NCHA High Point Horse titles.
- All Max’s stallions have been listed AQHA Leading Sires in various categories.
