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JESSIE MCKENZIE
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WALLY DUNN
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LANCE GIESBRECHT
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2010 Hall of Fame

Randy Goulding



Awards & Honours

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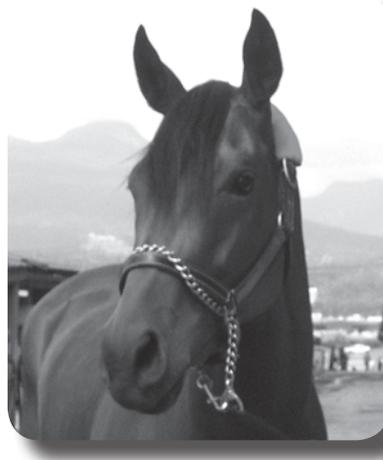
Hall of Fame Inductees

by Randy Goulding

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Dancewithavixen

Dancewithavixen will always be linked to trainer Tom Longstaff, who died just prior to her induction at the annual awards dinner. He was thrilled when he was informed she had been voted into the Hall of Fame.



It took Dancewithavixen five starts before she won her first race. But when she broke her maiden she did it in style, capturing the 2002 B.C. Cup Debutante.

Trained by the late Tom Longstaff, Dancewithavixen went on to become one of the most dominant 3-year-old fillies ever to run in British Columbia. Starting with a win in the Fair Lady, she won seven stakes at Hastings, including a score over older fillies and mares in the Grade 3 Ballerina.

Dancewithavixen was bred and owned by Cliff Baldwin, who became a breeder more by accident than by design. Due to health issues in 1994, Baldwin was forced to retire from his pet store business. He was looking for a hobby, so his long-time friend Longstaff encouraged him to get involved in horse racing.

The first horse he claimed was Hot Ginger for \$4,000. Although Hot Ginger didn't win a race for Baldwin, she produced Dancewithavixen, as well as Dancwithavictor, who won nine races including two stakes races. Both horses were by Vying Victor.

"I really wasn't planning on becoming a breeder," says Baldwin. "But after Hot Ginger got hurt, I didn't know what else to do with her. The best thing we did was breed her to Vying Victor."

After three straight losses in maiden special weight races to begin her career, Dancewithavixen surprised Baldwin when she finished second in the Timber Music with Felipe Valdez aboard for the first time. The improved performance encouraged Baldwin and Longstaff to run her in the Debutante. Valdez rode Dancewith-

avixen for the rest of her career at Hastings.

"We actually liked another horse we had, Rainbows Forever, a lot more in the Timber Music, so we were absolutely ecstatic when Vixen finished second," says Baldwin.

After her win in the Debutante, Dancewithavixen closed out her year with a troubled fifth in the Sadie Diamond Futurity.

When she came back as a 3-year-old, however, Dancewithavixen turned into a monster. She romped in the Fair Lady and Supernaturel before being upset by Dee's Love in the Emerald Downs. A few people were surprised when she came back a week later to run in a mile and a sixteenth allowance race.

"Some people were critical when we brought her back that quickly," says Baldwin. "But we wanted to give her a race going long before the Liberation. It worked out perfectly, and one newspaper reporter called it a 'paid workout.'"

Dancewithavixen went on to win the next four stakes for 3-year-old fillies by a combined total of over 20 lengths, including a walk in the park in the B.C. Cup Stallion Stakes. Her winning streak came to an end when she lost by a neck to Raylene in the Grade 2 B.C. Oaks.

"Tom told me she would have won if she had seen Raylene coming," says Baldwin. "He opened up her blinkers in the Ballerina, and they couldn't get past her."

As a 4-year-old Dancewithavixen dominated her rivals in her first two starts, winning the Strawberry Morn and the Vancouver Sun. In the Sun she packed 124 pounds and since

weight was becoming an increasing concern, she was given a chance to run with the boys, finishing third to Lord Nelson in the Hong Kong Jockey Club and second to Roscoe Pito in the John Longden 6000.

Dancewithavixen closed out her career with an easy win in the B.C. Cup Distaff. It was the third year in a row she had won a race on B.C. Cup Day.

"She broke a bone in her ankle, and Felipe thinks she did it pulling up after the race," says Baldwin.

She was retired to Baldwin's farm in Abbotsford, where she died in 2009.

"We had to put her down because she just couldn't stand up any more," says Baldwin. "She was a great mom. She couldn't stand up she would still nurse her foal lying down. She paid for the farm. I can't tell you how much she meant to me."

Dancewithavixen will always be linked to trainer Tom Longstaff, who died just prior to her induction at the annual awards dinner. He was thrilled when he was informed she had been voted into the Hall of Fame.

"Fantastic," he said. "She was tremendous, and I have never seen a horse with more heart. It is a great honour and I really believe she deserves the award."

Anyone who saw Dancewithavixen run would agree wholeheartedly.



Troy Taylor



“Sandy Fleet set a world record for 6 ½ furlongs in the Governors Handicap at Longacres in 1966, and he fell on his head coming out of the gate,” says Taylor. “Larry Pierce rode him, and he said Sandy Fleet was the fastest horse he had ever ridden.”

There was a 44-year-gap between trainer Troy Taylor’s first training title at Hastings in 1963 and his second in 2007. However, he didn’t waste any time in notching his third title in 2008. When he led the standings again in 2009 and 2010, he joined Lance Giesbrecht as the only person to be leading trainer at Hastings four years in a row.

Taylor, along with four brothers and two sisters, grew up with horses on his parent’s farm in Payette, Idaho. His father Herb trained horses, and two brothers, Roy and J.D. also became trainers.

“We all learned a lot by helping out my dad at the farm and the track,” says Taylor. “Roy was my identical twin. He would sub for me and nobody would know the difference. My dad couldn’t tell us apart, and he called me ‘twin’ until I was a teenager.”

Taylor took out his trainer’s license as a 22-year-old in 1953 and made his first trip to Hastings in 1958.

“They were having a hard time filling races because of a virus,” says Taylor. “Carl Baze and I decided to ship some horses up from Washington. I liked it here, so I’ve been coming back off and on since then.”

Taylor was also a leading trainer at Portland Meadows. One year the battle for the title came down to him and Carl Baze.

“Carl and I were the best of friends, but it was a heated competition because they were giving away a new car to the winner,” says Taylor. “I edged him out, and I got a new Austin Healey. I think Carl had more wins but they used a point system.”

Because of the longevity of Taylor’s career, it is impossible to say how many races he has actually won. The Daily Racing Form computerized its database in 1976, and since then Taylor has compiled a 527-382-360 record from 2,926 starts.

Not included in the totals are the 34 wins when he was leading trainer at Hastings in 1963. He beat a solid group of horsemen: the next four trainers in the standings that year were Sid Martin, Sonny O’Connell, Bunny Johnson and Jim Halket, all members of the B.C. Horse Racing Hall of Fame.

Taylor counts Holy Nova, the 2009 Ballerina winner, and Sir Gallovic, who won the Grade 3 Premiers in 2007, as the best horses he has trained in this era. Looking back a few decades, he rates Sandy Fleet and Turn to Fire as a couple of his favorites.

“Sandy Fleet set a world record for 6 ½ furlongs in the Governors Handicap at Longacres in 1966, and he fell on his head coming out of the gate,” says Taylor. “Larry Pierce rode him, and he said Sandy Fleet was the fastest horse he had ever ridden.”

On the Horse Racing TV website, host Jon White lists “winning my first \$100 wager when Turn to Fire prevailed by a scant nose in the 1971 Fashion Handicap at Longacres,” as one of his most memorable moments in horse racing.

Taylor owes a lot of his success to owner Glen Todd. They met each other in 1963 when Todd was covering horse racing for the Columbian newspaper.

“The first day of the meet Troy won three

races,” says Todd. “It was pretty obvious he knew how to train a horse.”

Todd gravitated to training in 1973 but gave it up to take over his father’s business in 1977. Taylor has been Todd’s trainer for the past 33 years.

“Loyalty goes both ways,” says Todd. “Nobody knows more about a horse than Troy. It is scary at times.”

Taylor is very appreciative of everything Todd has done for him.

“You can’t have success in this business without good horses,” says Taylor. “Glen has certainly provided me with the kind of opportunity that any trainer would love to have.”

At 79 Taylor is still going strong, but he isn’t sure how many more years he will keep training.

“Maybe one more year. We’ll see. One thing I do know for sure - it has been a lot of fun.”

