

Ernestine (Ball) Morrison
KQHA Hall of Fame Inductee

Born Ernestine Frances Ball in Arkansas City, Kansas, Ernestine Morrison spent most of her early years in dance and drama classes instead of around horses. In fact, her music teacher mother enrolled her in dancing class at age three with perhaps her first showmanship class occurring as a participant in the Arkalalah Festival Parade. Her family then moved to Wichita where she continued in dancing and drama classes. By the age of eight, she was living in Salina where she grew up participating in high school musicals and variety shows.

Despite all the drama and dance classes, Ernestine really wanted to be a baseball player, even though girls sports were practically nonexistent at the time. She also loved animals, especially horses, and spent much of her free time reading all the Black Stallion books and every other horse story in the children's library.

She married Harold Morrison, also of Salina, in 1956, and they raised two daughters: Kim Norwood of Salina, and Teri Ann Johnson of Memphis, Tennessee. The Morrisons have one grandson, Brandon Norwood of Salina.

In 1961, Ernestine and Harold built a home on his family farm north of Salina. Soon they bought Kim a pony, then an old grade barrel horse, then a three-year-old Quarter Horse gelding. It wasn't long before Kim noticed all the horse trailers that passed by their farm on the weekends which led the Morrisons to their first horse show, and the second, and . . . well, the rest is, as they say, history. By 1971 Kim was participating in 4-H and Saddle Club shows, and Ernestine was introduced to the show ring when she and Teri Ann entered Lead Pony classes.

When Kim was chosen to represent Kansas in the Queen contest at the All-American Congress in Columbus, Ohio in 1973 and 1975, Ernestine's long involvement with the Kansas Quarter Horse Association officially began. In fact, the whole family became involved in all facets of the organization including show management, and the girls earned numerous honors and awards.

In addition to the girl's accomplishments, Harold became a member of the KQHA Board of Directors in 1979 and served as youth advisor for six years. He was elected president of the association in 1994 and 1995 and was inducted into the KQHA Hall of Fame in 2005.

When the girls quit showing, Ernestine decided to return to the horse show ring in 1988, using Teri Ann's good gelding, Mr Poco Pride (a.k.a. Charlie) in the new Novice Amateur Showmanship classes. They won the Kansas High-Point Year-end award in that class in both 1989 and 1990. She also placed ninth at the Quarter horse Congress.

Due to Charlie's advanced age, she purchased Sir Valentino and repeated as Kansas champion in 1992 and 1993. The duo also took eighth place at the 1993 Quarter Horse Congress. When the Amateur Select Division began, she and Rudy were Kansas Hi-Point winners in Showmanship in 1997.

It was because of Ernestine's deep involvement in KQHA activities that she was willing to set up a temporary office in Kim's old bedroom after the KQHA office in Canton was closed. Without benefit of a salary for the first year, she began to dig the Kansas Quarter Horse Association out of a very deep hole. Her only qualifications were the ability to balance a checkbook and completion of one year of Journalism and Printing in high school. With no computer and just one tray of 3 x 5 membership cards plus some bank deposit slips to tell who and what had been paid or not paid, she rapidly found out that the position was the ultimate test for multi-tasking. That continued even after the acquisition of a computer.

With the patience and support of many KQHA members, Ernestine paid the association's bills, helped put on the State Fair and Fall Circuit horse shows, coordinated the futurities, ordered awards, spent many hours on the phone, organized the annual meetings, designed the Equifest booth, published and mailed the magazine every month, prepared financial reports, kept track of memberships, and generally restored the association's credibility. When Ernestine retired at the end of 2001, the KQHA had \$31,821 in the checking account and \$37,637 in CDs and the magazine was self-supporting. The organization was thriving once again.

Ernestine Morrison was inducted into the Kansas Quarter Horse Association January 20, 2007, for her outstanding dedication and service to the KQHA.