

POAC Hall of Fame – Barbara Klein

Barbara Klein is a well-known, longtime POA breeder from Colorado. For her contributions as a POA breeder and for her service and support at both the state and national level, I believe she is a worthy addition into the POAC Hall of Fame.

Ever since she was a little girl, Barbara has loved horses. So, naturally, when she attended Colorado State University, she took several horsemanship classes and graduated with a degree in animal science. While in Fort Collins, Barbara met and married Raymond Klein, and by the mid-'60s, the Kleins had three young children and thought it would be good to have ponies for the kids to ride. The first three ponies they had were not POAs, but it wasn't long before POAs arrived on the scene. In 1967, Ray and Barbara purchased five mares from the McDonnells in Montana. They also bought a 9-year-old POA stallion named Corette's Comanche at the 1967 International Sale.



Over the years, Barbara worked hard to improve her crosses to produce quality kids' ponies with good dispositions and solid pedigrees. Ray supported Barbara's interest in the POAs, but his work in farming kept him busy, and he was not able to spend much time with the ponies. So Barbara was in charge of the Klein's POA breeding program, along with taking the kids to the shows. She stressed the importance of sportsmanship and, as her kids grew older, she taught them to become self-reliant and responsible enough to groom and saddle their ponies and make it to their classes on time.

Barbara promoted POAs both within the club and to folks outside the club who might not be familiar with the breed. She advertised in local horse publications and in the national POA magazine. Many times, she got phone calls from people who were interested in POAs; and if Barbara didn't have the right POA for them, she was always happy to point families in the direction of other POA breeders in the area who might have what they were looking for.

Barbara was an active member of the Colorado POA club from the late '60s, through the '70s, and until the mid-'80s. She was the secretary of the Colorado POA club from 1972-1975, and she also served on the Colorado POA Board of Directors and was one of the original members of the Colorado POA futurity committee. During the '70s and '80s, Barbara also helped with organizing and promoting the Rocky Mountain Regional POA Sale held each spring in Denver, and she consigned horses to that sale as well as to the International POA Sale for many years. By 1980, Barbara was a state inspector, and then a national inspector.

Several POAs bred by the Kleins were making a name for themselves on the national scene during those years. Among the best known are Klein's Flashy Eagle, who earned his Supreme Champion and won many other awards, including first in the nation as high point gelding; Plaudit's High Bar, the 1980 International Grand Champion Stallion, first in the nation as high point stallion several years running, and a Supreme Champion; and Klein's Bold Legend, who earned his Supreme Champion and was later inducted into the POAC Hall of Fame.

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But to Barbara, it wasn't all about the awards. In addition to the POAs that were sold and shown nationally, she also sold many POAs to local riders in 4-H who loved their POAs even though they weren't in the national standings.

When Ray passed away unexpectedly in 1986, Barbara reluctantly ended the breeding program and sold the remaining POAs. Some years later, she ran into Janette Arends, a POA member who remembered Barbara from her previous time in the club. And then in 2006, Klein's Bold Legend was inducted into the POAC Hall of Fame. Being retired but thinking that she still was spry enough to raise a few more ponies, Barbara started a new breeding program – after being out of the POAs for two decades!

Barbara's new breeding program is under the name BDK POAs, and the first foal was born in 2008. And, once again, Barbara enjoys promoting the POAs, was on the Colorado POA futurity committee, has been on the national breeders committee and rules committee, and has served as a national inspector. And, although other commitments have prevented her from showing at Congress, at the national shows that have been held in Colorado, her ponies regularly win over ponies who have placed at Congress.

Barbara raised numerous champions through the years, but even more important than that, as a breeder and owner she is ethical and fair. She would never mistreat a pony to get it under the height limit, and she will never misrepresent her ponies in order to make a sale. Plus, she tries to keep in mind the long-term impact of her breeding program on the POA breed as a whole.

In addition to supporting the national club, Barbara has been a strong promotor of the POA breed to many groups outside of POAs. Recently, a number of her POAs have become stellar pony jumpers, bringing some much-needed color to the hunter-jumper world.

POAs have meant a lot to Barbara over the years, from watching the foals frolic in the pasture to traveling to shows and visiting with friends in the POA Club.

POAC is proud to induct Barbara Klein into the Hall of Fame.