

THE SPANISH MUSTANG FOUNDATION

NEWSLETTER - DECEMBER, 2023 VOL. 12

Our mission is to educate the public about the Spanish Mustang and the need to protect and perpetuate the breed.



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As a career Trial Lawyer, I represented people who had been severely injured and the families whose loved ones had been wrongfully killed; all by negligent individuals, hospitals, and corporations. As I was transitioning into retirement from my Chicago area law practice, after 43 years of practicing law I knew how important it would be to find a new life passion that could provide me with the additional meaning and purpose in my life that trial law had given me.

For my entire life I genuinely enjoyed being among, and interacting with, horses and my wife and I have taken many equestrian riding vacations all over the world. During and after my retirement from the active practice of law, I attended and participated in numerous horsemanship clinics; and I came to realize that the gentle and patient natural horsemanship techniques of Monty Roberts and Anna Twinney were consistent with my own personal values. My riding adventures and clinic experiences and education allowed me to understand that horses, and caretaking them, could become my new life passion.

During this transition period in my professional life, I began to research the numerous breeds of horses and I unexpectedly kept returning to the history and resources explaining the Spanish Mustang. Much of this rich history can be found on our Foundation's website. I was especially intrigued by this unique breed's history, physical attributes, temperament, intelligence, and survival skills. In the course of my research, I had the wonderful good fortune to contact the Spanish Mustang Foundation and had many personal and valuable discussions with its co-founder, the late Donna Mitchell. Donna was kind, knowledgeable, selfless, patient, and generous with her time and advice. She introduced me to Adam Edwards who operates the Paha Ponies Spanish Mustang Preserve near Devil's Tower, Wyoming. Paha Ponies admirably continues the epic and historic Spanish Mustang preservation efforts of the late Bob Brislaw and his family and their former Cayuse Ranch in southeast Wyoming.

During one of my trips from our Colorado home back to our farm in the Drifless Region of the Upper Mississippi River Valley in southeast Minnesota, in January 2019, I spent a day with Adam and his Spanish Mustangs at

the Paha Ponies Preserve. I was admirably impressed with Adam, his preservation efforts, and his enthusiasm for the breed; and I was equally impressed with the Spanish Mustangs of the Paha Ponies Preserve.

At the recommendation and urging of Adam, I spent a week attending an Anna Twinney Spanish Mustang Gentling clinic at the Paha Ponies Preserve during the fall of 2019. While I was at the clinic, I also worked with Adam to select five of his young, athletic, hardy, and beautiful Spanish Mustangs. We ultimately decided that I would become the owner and guardian of four fillies and one colt; all approximately 8 months old. During the first three months of 2020 my small young herd lived at Anna Twinney's ranch located between Denver and Colorado Springs. I worked with Twinney and one of her senior clinicians daily as we began their gentling and training process. My young fillies and colt arrived at their new forever home at our farm in southeast Minnesota the following April. Thereafter, I found myself in regular contact with Donna and Adam; and especially during those times when I thought that being a Trial Lawyer was far easier than gentling and training five young Spanish Mustangs! Adam and Donna have been absolutely invaluable to me; and the progress and accomplishments I have achieved with my young Spanish Mustangs have been due, in no small way, to the patient guidance and wisdom they have shared with me.

All of my horses are now gentle, well ground trained and three of them are ridden regularly. Most importantly, they are safe and happy. Each day with them is a new adventure and education; and, along with my loving and understanding family, my Spanish Mustangs provide me with true meaning and purpose each day. I have cherished learning their personalities, habits and temperaments and observing the dynamics of their herd; and they always make me smile and feel joyful and worthwhile.

This edition of our annual newsletter is respectfully devoted to our Foundation's co-founder, Donna Mitchell. My Spanish Mustangs and I will always be forever grateful to Donna as we carry her spirit with us as we strive to preserve and promote this most special and historic breed of horse.

Ed Walsh

REMEMBERING DONNA

Donna Mitchell was my good friend. The Spanish Mustangs introduced us. I lucked out!

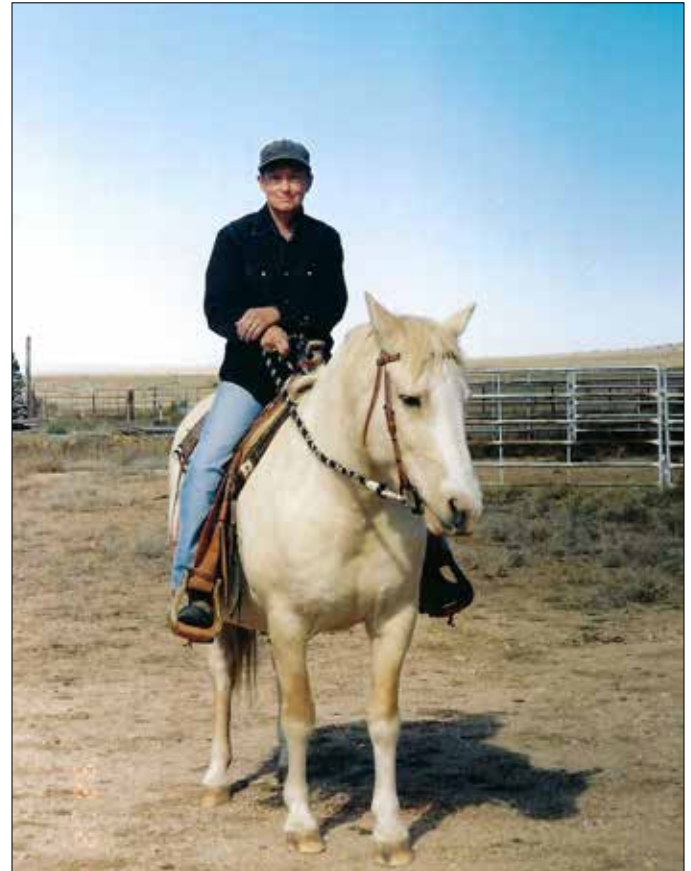
Our best times were spent hanging out with the horses: trips to the Cayuse Ranch, watching and learning from Emmet Brislaw, and many times returning home trailering several horses. Our mutual love for the horses and their incredible story prompted us to do more - in 2008 we formed the Spanish Mustang Foundation. Our goal was to share the story of the mustangs and do all we possibly could to protect their future: Kids horsemanship clinics, riding demonstrations, newsletter, presentations and production of a film 'Return of the Horse.'

Donna's laugh is what I remember! Watching the mustangs acting out their uncompromised instincts always brought great joy to Donna.

A lot of this laughter and joy drifted away this past year. Donna had been fighting her health challenges many more years than I thought. In true Donna spirit she never complained...just marched forward!

I miss you Donna. Sierra, Ed, Connie, Julia and I promise to continue your dream of a better place on earth for the Spanish Mustangs.

Doug Lanham



Donna & Sapupe



Donna & Noway Kassuggi

The first time I met Donna she gave me the coat off her back - an emblematic gesture of a woman who would do anything to help another. Once protected from the fierce Little Cayuse wind she insisted that I keep her magic cloak - open and willing to share her gifts freely Donna never expected anything in return. Donna was the kindest person I've ever known. Her life is a monument to all the 'wild and free Spanish Mustangs...the most beautiful, the most spirited and the most inspiring creature ever to print foot on the grasses of America' (Dobie). They, like Donna, have gone with the winds of vanished years carrying away an unprecedented life and a spirit.

I wear that damn Carhartt to this day in an attempt to imitate Donna; a real cowgirl with an innate ability to stay calm and cowgirl on.

Julia Lanham



Conejo, Donna & Quipu

THE SPANISH MUSTANG FOUNDATION ASSISTANCE

FEED

In 2023 The Spanish Mustang Foundation continues to support the protection and preservation of Colonial Spanish Horses. When the Brislawn horses were disbursed Adam Edwards established the Paha Ponies Spanish Mustangs herd in Wyoming with horses from the Brislawn herd at that time. Donna Mitchell was involved

in that mission to establish a safe place for the descendants of some of the Spanish Mustangs the Brislawn family collected and bred. Donna's legacy with that project was renewed this year with a grant for hay that will feed Paha Ponies through the winter.



Adam Edwards and one of the 'young ones' Photo credit: Adam Edwards



Photo credit: Adam Edwards



Photo credit: Adam Edwards



Photo credit: Adam Edwards

This year Jennifer Murchison was challenged to find enough good hay for her horses due to the severe weather conditions in her area of Texas. No rain meant crops failed. She did find hay, but it needed to be transported to her barn. We were able to help her in that endeavor. Horse ranching has changed from the times “the

Originals” bred Spanish Mustangs. Those ranchers and Spanish Mustang breeders could graze their herds on the rolling grassland. The climate has changed. Contemporary breeders have to find and pay for other solutions.

RESCUE



Wakiya, Lauren's Spanish Mustang Mare upon arrival at the Blue Raven Farm in North Carolina
Photo credit: BRF Spanish Mustang Foundation

Lauren Wy'East located a new home and safe place for her mare, Wakiya, in North Carolina, a state that adopted the Spanish Colonial Horse as the designated horse of North Carolina. Wakiya needed to be supplied with veterinary certification and transported from Ohio to the Blue Raven Farm. Lauren attended to all the details and The Spanish Mustang Foundation was pleased to assist with financial support.

RESEARCH

Iconic images of “the originals” come to mind, the Holbrook and Brislawn families, Gilbert Jones, Ilo Belsky, Robert Painter, Wilbur-Cruce ranchers, Doty and Virginia Baca, Romero/McKinley historic breeders, and others. The changing times and conditions of ranch land as these historic figures step into the past prompted Connie Doughman's research and documentation project that records and preserves the history of the descendants of the Colonial Spanish Horse on this continent. The Historic

Strains, the first group to be covered, was completed last year. The second group, the Colonial horses of the eastern seaboard and others that help establish the second group is near completion and will be added to the history project and preserved in November. This falls under the Education category in our Mission Statement. You'll be able to find it on our website under Resources.

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THE SPANISH MUSTANG FOUNDATION

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WE APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT!



Photo credit: Doug Lanham