

Doug Williamson, master horseman, teacher and friend, passes away on Aug. 14 at 82

Doug Williamson, a legend in performance horse circles who taught and inspired a generation, passed away Aug. 14 in his home alongside his loving wife Carol. He was 82.

Williamson was born March 15, 1942 and grew up on his family's ranch in Vale, Ore. From a young age, he worked on the ranch and developed his cowboy and horsemanship skills. After graduating from high school, he worked on several ranches where he was in charge of large herds of cattle and also continued training horses. He became a full-time horse trainer in his twenties and embarked on a successful career that spanned over six decades.

Over the years, he had training facilities in Nampa, Idaho, Bakersfield, and ultimately in Scottsdale, Ariz. His lifelong passion was to be the best horseman he could be. Two special accomplishments of his career included his induction into the NRCHA Hall of Fame and securing his place as a NRCHA Million Dollar Rider.

Doug's legacy in the reined cow horse and cutting communities is one that will live on for many years to come. He mostly showed Open-caliber horses for their owners, but he had a few non-pros -- and he was willing to give tips to other trainers. He also would ask them questions if he was stuck on something.

"I know a lot of people think about the horse showing, his accolades, and everybody knows that he's been an icon, a legend in our world," trainer Ron Emmons told the Quarter Horse News. "The friendship he gave me was hard to describe. I don't have many friends that close,

and I think truthfully a lot of people don't have that close of friends. So there's a lot of people that have a lot of accolades. What's more important than anything at this point in my life, it's more about family and friends. This is the job -- showing horses -- and we do the best we can at it. But I cherish friendship too."

Many people who had met Williamson at horse shows grew to know him outside of the arena too.

"He was a fierce competitor, but always friendly," said fellow cow horse trainer Barkemeyer said. "He always wanted to win first no matter what, but at the same time he would help you try to beat him."

Williamson's friendly demeanor and willingness to teach or learn contributed to his success and his legacy. He was often seen at horse shows wearing a red pearl snap shirt, a wild rag and a smile upon his face. His horse show career spanned six decades and touched the lives of many in the warm up pen. Those who didn't attend shows near him became fans through his podcast interviews, countless magazine features and his presence in the documentary film *Down The Fence*.

Horses that Williamson bred earned \$17,542 according to EquiStat. Horses owned by Williamson and Carol earned \$78,228, a hefty portion of that can be attributed to Doc At Night (Mr San Olen x Docs Hickory Nut x Doc's Hickory) and High Brow Shiner (Shining Lil Nic x High Brow Meow x High Brow Cat). As a rider, he earned \$1.6 Million. His first recorded earnings totaled \$958 in 1985, which was the year EquiStat began tracking



Doug Williamson on Rocking J Ranch's Short And Smart in 2012

earnings. His most recent earnings were posted to EquiStat just two years ago in 2022, when he was 80.

"He was always wanting to be progressive as time went on and he would say to me, 'When I quit learning, I'll be done,'" added Emmons. "He was always asking and watching. He got a lot out of watching people work their horses. He stayed pretty much with his style, but added things to it that made his horses competitive throughout the years. He could always see what was happening, and he'd either ask, or he would figure it out on his own," Emmons said.

Said his wife Carol, "he was always open to having one of the younger guys tell him what he needed to do."

Carol said.

In Arizona, Carol "the little blonde" as Doug called her, tried to push him toward retirement. However, the cowboy and horseman was rarely content unless

he was on the back of a horse.

"We've only been on about three vacations in 20 years," Carol said. "We went to Hawaii and we really only did the vacation thing for half the week and then we went to Charles Stevens' ranch and did branding for half of that vacation."

Williamson is survived by his wife, Carol, children Denice (David) Wood, Brenda (Bob) Jones, Brett (Jory) Williamson, Tate (Rose Marie) Williamson, Lauren Ansolabehere and Scott Camp. Sister Kay (Al) Brassfield and brothers Todd Williamson and Toby (Linda) Williamson. Father-in-Law, Jim (Kathy) Scott, mother-in-law, Wanda Scott, and brother-in-law, Don Scott. He was the proud Grandpa of 12 and Great Grandpa of eight.