

DIANE MCMURTREY

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TWHBEA Board Members:

I am asking for your vote in the upcoming TWHBEA Executive Committee election. The nominating committee has put me on the slate for Pleasure Horse Vice President, a position that I would be honored to hold. The Pleasure Horse Division has seen many changes this year and, the implementation of these changes has been a concern for many of us who show pleasure horses. I promise, if elected, these changes will be reviewed by the Pleasure Horse Subcommittees and Pleasure Horse Committee.

I look forward to talking with each of you in December, and hope that after you have reviewed my qualifications you will cast your vote for me.

I am the rare find called a native Floridian. In a transient state like Florida, people with roots here are rare. The Orlando area has seen changes just like the Walking Horse industry. Some changes aren't always the best direction but I have learned that with dedication, great things can occur. Progress often takes a bumpy path but, hard work by persevering individuals can smooth the way. My experience in the citrus industry has taught me that re-evaluation and re-direction are often the only venues available. Being a third generation citrus grower, the devastating freeze of 1983 nearly destroyed my business. I did replant my groves but, in 1987, another catastrophic freeze killed my young grove. That, combined with citrus canker and other diseases, caused me to start over with pine trees and eventually, selling development land. This experience has taught me that starting over is not always a disaster.

Along with the citrus business, I obtained my real estate salesman's license shortly after graduation from High School. As with most Central Floridian's I spent several years working at Walt Disney World and Sea World. After adopting my son, Matthew, in 1988 when he was 1 month old, Mom has been my main title. Of course, volunteerism is part of the word Mom. For the past 10 years I have been an active member of the First Baptist Church of Orlando. I was active in the PTA, serving as Secretary for several years. I served as teacher's helper for as long as Matthew was in school. I currently volunteer at Freedom Ride, a special needs riding center. I am a multi-year Director for the Florida Walking and Racking Horse Assoc. and have held the post of Vice President of the club.

I got my first pony when I was 3. When my grandmother would drive my sister and me to piano lessons, we passed Mr. Frank Roper's barn. If they were working horses in the ring outside, we would pull over and watch. On occasion we would stop by and go in the barn and admire the beautiful horses. My grandmother decided that someday we would own a Tennessee Walking Horse. Our first mare, Midnight Beauty Gal, was in hindsight, a common mare but, for us, the finest horse ever. She was a Registered Tennessee Walking Horse. We couldn't have been prouder. I remember the pride we took in her papers. When people now tell me about their horse and I realize that their papers aren't great, I remember how awestruck I was at having a registered horse. It makes me think about how blessed we are in this industry to have such a great horse. I continued to have Walking Horses from that time forward. I had Matthew on his first Walker when he was 5 weeks old. He has grown up at the World Versatility Show, eventually winning the youth and overall high point with each of my geldings. He achieved Youth Supreme Versatility with both Cash's Exclamation and Pay At The Pump and I am currently working on my Supreme Versatility with both these horses. I am an avid trail rider and meet people on the trail regularly who are curious about my horses.

It is my sincere desire to positively promote the Tennessee Walking Horse through every possible venue. The product we have is by far the best horse for any and every equine pursuit. It is imperative that at this time, we promote the Tennessee Walking Horse Breeders and Exhibitors' Association to be the true leader in the gaited horse industry. The same as people associate the words Quarter Horse with anything Western; we must make TWHBEA the front line source for gaited horse information. There is a large market out there looking for a smooth pleasurable ride. We must ensure that TWHBEA is the first place they look.

Regards,

Diane McMurtrey
TWHBEA Director - Florida