

Nancy Reed

October 31, 1946 - February 26, 2017

Following a five-year battle with cancer, noted California horsewoman Nancy Reed, age 70, passed peacefully at home in Lakeside, Calif. on February 26, 2017, surrounded by family and friends, with one dog between her feet and another at her side to comfort her passing.

Nancy Reed was born October 31, 1946 in Omaha, Nebraska to Harold L. and Virginia Middleton Reed, joining four-year brother David.

Nancy attended schools in Hinsdale, Illinois and in Niskayuna, New York. Moving to the nearby historic hamlet of Vischer Ferry where she established a stable, Nancy graduated from Shenendehoah High School in Clifton Park, New York in 1964.

She was preceded in death by her parents, and by her older brother, David. She is survived by her younger brother Jonathan Reed and his wife Janet, of Arnolds Park, Iowa and her niece, Emily Vassar and her husband Sam of Marion, Iowa.

And also by her much-loved pets Chopper, the pot-bellied pig, and dogs Mia, Milo, Little One, Baxter, and Annabelle.

A celebration of life is being held in Lakeside on March 13, 2017 for friends and students to commemorate the positive impact she made in their lives. Guests were invited to contribute to their local animal rescue shelter.

The rest of her story

It was often easier for Nancy to relate to animals rather than people—which did not stop her from being a successful horse-and-rider trainer to hundreds of beginning and adult riding students.

A natural athlete, she was born crazy about horses. And like most equestrians, she easily recalled the first time she ever sat on a horse. It was at Grandpa Reed's farm in Rinard, Iowa on a blind pony. She was a friend with her grandparents' neighbor Billy Winkleman who provided ponies for Sears, Roebuck & Company, which back in the day sold ponies out of its catalog. She and "Billy Wink" stayed in touch for decades.

She even shared her love of horses with then-actor Ronald Reagan when he stopped in for a short visit to her family home in Hinsdale, Illinois.

In 1958, Nancy's family moved to Niskayuna in upstate New York. Horse jumping was in her blood, as she would practice jumping with the family's two dogs by making a series of makeshift fences in the living room and teaching the dogs to leap over broomsticks. Four years later, Nancy's family bought a five-acre farm in Vischer Ferry where they improved the barn and graded an arena to support Nancy's passion.

By the time she was in high school, Nancy was showing competitively all over the East, and competing at Madison Square Garden as a teenager. She got to ride and train with top trainer and judge Victor Hugo Vidal. While learning and riding, she was training horse and riders all along the way, and many of her friends became clients.

By 1966 Nancy was running her own training business, called Amity Farm. In '68 she married horse trainer Donald Shy and soon moved to St. Louis to work for the Baskowitz family, who were suppliers for Anheuser-Busch company. They showed and trained horses for the likes of the Busches and brought home top prizes. In the 70's Nancy also beat the then-young Will Simpson in a speed class at the Minnesota Fair. The future Olympic gold medal winner told Nancy that she must have been really fast to beat his horse.

Divorced after five years, Nancy moved to Arizona where she worked with and later lived with her friend and horseman Ira Schulman while he recovered from a horrific accident. Like many others in her life, Ira remained a close friend until the time of her death. In the 80's Nancy moved to Bonita where she worked for Sally Black and Trig Trygland at BlackLand Farm. She taught all levels of horses and riders and was a fixture at the Greater San Diego Hunter Jumper shows from the beginning.

At Sweetwater Farms in Bonita, the Hazards, Jo and her two daughters Leslie and Paige, were and are some of Nancy's long-standing customers who teamed up to earn numerous wins, including the youngest and oldest Greater San Diego Hunter Jumper Association (GSDHJA) medal final winners. Paige won it at 12 years of age and Leslie won it at 25. The entire Hazard family has remained close friends for more than 30 years. Her close friend and founder of California Riding Magazine, Cheryl Erpelding, rode with Nancy since the 90s and helped her find horses that earned champion ribbons and marketed the magazine with such names as Riding Magazine's Press Pass, Riding Magazine's Hot Off the Press and Riding Magazine's Latest Edition.

Moving to Lakeside in 2004, Nancy trained and taught at Blossom Valley Ranch in East County and owned the thoroughbred Final Edition—known by intimates as Jack—shown by Leslie Hazard, and Ballroom, a many time champion at the GSDHJA shows.

Nancy's lifelong dedication to horses and riders and creating winning teams was honored with the GSDHJA's creation of the Nancy Reed Perpetual Hunter Derby Trophy in 2016.