



Thomas Rodger Chown

February 14, 1952 - January 20, 2020

AQHA World and Congress Champion Tom Chown passed away on Monday January 20, 2020 at the age of 67.

Chown was born in California and started riding by the time he was 4, when he started helping his grandfather, Reno Chown, prepare Palominos for the Rose Parade. Tom's father, Clarence Chown, trained horses and built western movie sets in Hollywood, until 1964, when he started the Rawhide Ranch in Bonsall, California, where some of the industry's top trainers – Charlie Cole, Brad Jewett and Matt Mills – learned to ride. Breaking colts was a daily chore for Tom. His father brought in wild horses by the double-loaded stack trailers, for his boys to break. Little did Tom and his brothers know that those experiences would someday serve as the base upon which they would each build their own World Championship careers. Leonard Davis earned his AQHA World Championship title in Working Cow Horse. Troy Davis captured a WCHA Championship title; Robert Chown claimed an AQHA World Championship title in Reining and Tom in Western Pleasure.

By the time he turned 14, Tom had already begun training horses for the public, showing at the California open shows in most all events. He took as many as 14 horses to the contests but had to have someone else transport them as he was not yet old enough to drive. His nickname was “boy trainer” and Tom spent hours observing, making mental notes on what worked and what didn't work. He developed his own style by watching some of California's greatest professional horsemen – Bobby Ingersol, Ronnie Richards, Bill Ink, John Hoyt (from Arizona) and Les Vogt.

When he was 24 years old, Tom met Jerry Vawter, who taught him the conformation and pedigree of the breeding business and convinced him to participate in American Quarter Horse Association shows. His first stop was the Arizona Sun Circuit where he first saw Jerry Wells, Tommy Manion, Larry Sullivant and Matlock Rose. He ended up selling four of the five horses he took there. By October, Tom found himself in the market for a couple of Reining horses, so he headed to the All-American Quarter Horse Congress for the first time. He has said that it only took one trip there to know that one day he would himself compete there.

Through Vawter, Tom became friends with Sullivant, who was from Gainesville, Texas.

Chown began traveling with Sullivant and Manion buying and selling horses together and before long Tom realized Texas was the place to be. Land was purchased in Pilot Point and he established Tom Chown Willow Tree Farm. Not long after moving to Texas, Manion asked Tom for some help with a 1979 brown stallion by Docs Hotrodder and out of Miss Clique, that he had in for training in western events. Tom thought he was such a trainable horse that he decided to buy him. With the help of Vic and Shirleyne Clotts, Hotrodders Jet Set was soon purchased and Tom's career as a stallion owner began. Over the next decades, Tom would be associated with many other highly decorated stallions, like Radical Rodder, Protect Your Assets, Triples, Hot Impulse, Don't Skip Zip, Eternal Impression, Simply Hot, Hot Pretense, Hot Attraction and Green With Invy.

Chown and his (then) wife, Carrie Oakley, raised AQHA World Champion My Bodys Hot, a 1988 bay mare by Hotrodders Jet Set and out of Carrie's mare, Delea Siemon (also inducted into the NSBA Hall of Fame in the Breeding Horse Category in 2007). In 1990 Tom claimed a unanimous AQHA World Championship title in the 2-Year-Old Open Western Pleasure on My Bodys Hot by placing first on all five judges' cards.

Tom and Carrie also raised AQHA World Champion and NSBA Hall of Fame sire Radical Rodder and sold him to Diane Chilton-Harper and her husband, Dr. Howard Harper, of Pilot Point, as a yearling. Tom broke him as a 2-year-old and showed him to a bronze championship in the 2-Year-Old Open Western Pleasure at the 1993 AQHA World Championship Show, where he was the highest placing stallion in the class.

Throughout his career, Tom Chown had the opportunity to show such decorated horses as Radical Looking, Shes Sultry Hot and Rhapsody In The Rain. He earned Congress Championships and Reserve Championships in Reining and Western Riding in addition to Western Pleasure and trained and coached Congress Champions in Horsemanship and Trail. In addition, Chown earned World Championship titles from the PHBA and APHA.

In 2006 Chown was inducted into the NSBA Hall of Fame in the Individual Category and in 2007 he was one of 70 professionals called upon by the AQHA and NSBA to meet and develop a standardized system by which all Western Pleasure exhibitors are judged.

In 2014 Chown established Tom Chown Horsemanship and he has been conducting training clinics in Horsemanship, Showmanship, Pleasure and Western Riding all over the United States and in Europe. He also helped establish successful breeding programs, contributing to facility design and equine management strategies.

Tom is survived by his mother, Mary Jean Chown, a son, Mathew Chown, daughters, Amber (Rob) Chambers; Courtney (Aaron) Moses; brothers, Robert Chown, Leonard Davis and Troy Davis; sisters, Linda Chown Bowersox and Patty Chown Brand; and grandchildren, Payton Chambers and Cruz Chambers.

On February 25th at 2pm, a celebration of life will be held at Oak Meadow Ranch in Valley View, TX. (440 Red Top Rd Valley View, TX 76272)

In lieu of flowers, the family requests memorials made in Tom Chown's name to the NSBA

Trainers Crisis Fund. Donations can be made online at <https://www.nsba.com/trainers-crisis-fund> or mailed to the NSBA Foundation 1391 St Paul Avenue, Gurnee, IL 60031. On-line condolences may be shared at <http://www.slaymemorialfuneralhome.com>.

Arrangements are under the direction of Terri Slay and Slay Memorial Funeral Center.

To send a flower arrangement to the family of Thomas Rodger Chown, please [click here](#) to visit our Sympathy Store.

Comments



“ tom was a good friend and great horseman he organised for me my first job after graduating from rawhide with jerry vawter another great horseman my thoughts and prays to toms family mary jean linda and the boys toms last trip to australia we where able to catch up he will be missed

allen fishburn - April 01, 2020 at 12:00 AM



“ Thanks for the friendship we had for a short time.

Les Tucker - February 25, 2020 at 12:00 AM



“ Prayers for Toms family and friends...especially Mother Mick, Troy, Len and Robert...may God hold you even closer during this time of grief.

February 24, 2020 at 12:00 AM



“ My thoughts and prayers are with all Toms friends and family!!

Kim Ferguson - February 17, 2020 at 12:00 AM



“ In loving memory of a wonderful person. We will miss you always.

JANIE LUCAS-SCHNUCK - February 17, 2020 at 12:00 AM



“ So sad to see you go old friend. Rest in piece. See you down the road.

Andy and Carol Rees - February 17, 2020 at 12:00 AM



“ It's with a heavy heart that is filled with so many wonderful memories back to our Rawhide Days in the 60's. Tom taught me so much and has always had a special place in my heart in addition to his wonderful family. Sending my thoughts and prayers and know you are in a happier place with God. As always he will take care of you.

Cheryl Abel/Garcia - February 08, 2020 at 12:00 AM



“ Prayers for all those touched by Tom's life and passing. I enjoyed our visits talking about faith, family, horses, and life in general. God bless.

Rev John Theisen - February 07, 2020 at 12:00 AM



“ One of the nicest guys I had the privilege to know while I lived in Pilot Point in the 90s. He was always very sweet to my daughter when she visited his ranch for a sleep over. Rest easy Tom.

Rosemary Dvorak - February 07, 2020 at 12:00 AM



“ Thoughts and prayers during this difficult time. I will miss him for you, the world will miss him, and more than anyone, his family will miss him. There is a huge void left behind by the sudden passing, we will all have to try to help fill it. We all have a little bit of Tom within us and it would serve us well to show it to everyone.

Cheryl Carter-Hunt - February 07, 2020 at 12:00 AM



“ One of the jeeps Tom customized at his shop In Holland, MI! So talented and meticulous !!!

Kate Brickley - February 06, 2020 at 12:00 AM



“ Tom and Radar

Kate Brickley - February 06, 2020 at 12:00 AM



“ Tom and I shared a short time together and I will always remember the good times at the horse shows, the music we shared and the bond that is forever. My deepest condolences to his family and friends. He will be sorely missed and remembered.

Charlotte Thomas - February 06, 2020 at 12:00 AM



“ So sorry for your loss. My children and I had the privilege of seeing Tom at Equine Affaire in Massachusetts and attending his clinics there. My son (12 at the time) was so in awe of him that, when he saw Tom eating lunch at one the venues there, he walked over and introduced himself so that he could shake Toms hand and get to talk to him. My son came away from that exchange with a huge smile on his face. Tom had a lot to teach the horse world and he always remained true to what he believed was best for the horse. He will be missed greatly .

Jeanne-Marie Furnary - February 06, 2020 at 12:00 AM



“ Such a wonderful soul. Sending prayers and condolences to the family.

Kathy Kutzler - February 05, 2020 at 12:00 AM



“ Condolences to the family.

Tracie Edwards Massie - February 05, 2020 at 12:00 AM



“ Sending Prayers of Comfort in this Most Difficult Time

Kelly Tillman - February 05, 2020 at 12:00 AM



“ May God bless you and your family in this time of sorrow.

Bobbie Hodges - February 05, 2020 at 12:00 AM



“ I am missing you daily and so very grateful for the last 6 years we had together. Remembering the fun we had on our adventures and Radars ears always perk up when I say road trip. We had so much left to do... You will always be in our hearts. We love you. Kate, Dad, Radar and the girls.

Kate Brickley - February 05, 2020 at 12:00 AM



“ Condolences to the Chown family you have lost not only a Son Brother Father and Grandfather, but such a talented man and dedicated horseman he will be sadly missed in this world RIP Tom Chown we are better people for having known you.

Debbie Kenny - February 05, 2020 at 12:00 AM



“ prayers and sympathy

Beth Conrad - February 05, 2020 at 12:00 AM



“ Tom and I became friends through horses! I am still in denial of his passing. Great man, great horseman and he loved all his children very much. I will miss our many talks about many things. Tom, I pray for you to have eternal peace. I am so grateful our paths crossed on this earth. Rest easy my friend.

Rhonda Huckabee - February 05, 2020 at 12:00 AM



“ ~

Rhonda Huckabee,

Bixby, Oklahoma

Rhonda Huckabee - February 05, 2020 at 12:00 AM



“ So very sorry for your families loss! He was indeed a great horseman and contributed so much to the horses so many of us love! RIP

Melody Paul - February 05, 2020 at 12:00 AM



“ Dear Kate, and the Mother and Family of Tom, Jim and I are deeply saddened with the loss of Tom. We met Tom through our business in Holland, MI and we admired his new business venture. We have known Tom to be a class act and a gentleman. We are so very sorry for your deep loss. With our sympathy, Joanne and Jim Granzotto

Joanne Granzotto - February 05, 2020 at 12:00 AM



“ Rest In peace my friend. You will be missed.

Paulette Brendis - February 05, 2020 at 12:00 AM



“ Im the store manager for the Auto Zone by Toms custom shop. My store had the pleasure of working with him for two years. We always liked to see his custom builds as well as seeing him in the store. We will miss him and will miss wandering over to the shop to see what hes working on.

Tracie Malburg - February 05, 2020 at 12:00 AM



“ What a wonderful person. I first met Tom at Rawhide Ranch right around 1968. My parents owned a boarding stables in Gardena. Ca and we began buying great horses from them. Then I went to camp there many times and loved it. The Chowns are very good horse people.

Jan Gunnison - February 05, 2020 at 12:00 AM



“ Sending my condolences to Tom's family.

Nikki Miller - February 05, 2020 at 12:00 AM