



Honoring Hunt and Horses

An upcoming memorial clinic will celebrate Ray Hunt's life, teachings and love for the horse.



Ray never aspired to be a celebrity clinician. He just wanted to help every horse that crossed his path.

OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS, the horse community has lost three of its luminaries: Bill and Tom Dorrance, and Ray Hunt. Hunt and his mentor, Tom Dorrance, were like the Yoda and Obi Wan of enlightened horsemanship, and their deaths have created a disturbance in “the Force” of furthering their horse-handling techniques.

Tom Dorrance said of Hunt, “Meeting him was a fortunate experience in my life. I never met anyone who picked up on the slightest clue and built on it in the right direction in such a short time, as if he had been doing it all his life. Ray was doing well before I met him, so maybe all I did was help him realize how much potential he really had and how he could put it to work for himself in so many ways.”

Humble and self-effacing, both Hunt and Dorrance had an immeasurable effect on the way people work with their horses, creating a sensitive awakening within horsemen worldwide. When Hunt passed away this past March, many horse people

wanted to reach out and celebrate the gifts that the clinician had given to them. Hunt's wife, Carolyn, decided the best way to do that was to hold a memorial clinic, where a group of 20 horsemen and past students of Hunt's would gather for two days to share their skills and present to their peers how they're carrying on his legacy, a legacy heavily influenced by Dorrance.

The horsemen would honor Hunt's memory with public presentations, and, in turn, would themselves be honored for

their dedication to the horse and to Hunt's legacy.

“Ray and I met so many wonderful people along the way, and I want to have a chance to thank as many as I can,” says Carolyn. “This seems the best way to touch as many as possible. Besides, what could be better than to have all the people who meant so much to Ray be in one place, at one time and on horseback?”

Carolyn, with the help of clinicians Buck Brannaman and Martin Black, will hold the clinic in Fort Worth, Texas, at the Will Rogers Memorial Center's W.R. Watt Arena February 27–28, 2010. During the clinic, each presenter will work with a young horse.

“This is in no way a competition,” stresses Carolyn. “Rather, it is an opportunity for everyone in attendance to honor both the horse and Ray's memory. Ray wouldn't want it to just be about him.”

The presentations will be evaluated, not with regard to how much was accomplished, but more importantly, how it was accomplished—that is, how the presenter met each horse's needs. A panel of the participants' peers, along with the audience, will critique the presentations. Then all will have the chance to vote on which presenter embodies the ideals Ray worked to instill in his students.

“I've had different people ask me how long it takes to break a horse. Well, I never rode a broke horse but then maybe I'm a sorry hand. It seems to me that there is a better way of doing things so that the horse gets more sure.”

—RAY HUNT



Ray Hunt

The Legacy of a Legend
Memorial Clinic

February 27 & 28, 2010
Fort Worth, Texas

A limited-edition commemorative poster of the clinic will be available at the event.

The horseman voted as giving the best demonstration will receive one of Ray's personal Dale Harwood saddles. And as a remembrance and recognition of their skills, what Ray would have called their "try", all presenters will be given a piece of personal gear owned by Ray.

This idea is important to Carolyn and was reinforced for her after she sold one of Ray's saddles to Buck Brannaman's daughter, Reata.

"I received a wonderful letter from her saying she would take good care of Ray's saddle, ride it with pride and think of Ray and me every time she rides it," Carolyn says.

In giving each presenter a piece of Ray's gear, Carolyn hopes each will remember Ray and continue his legacy.

"He gave so much to each horse he worked with," she says. "And, in turn, each horse gave so much back to him. Ray would like this idea." 🐾

"Sometimes people try to teach a horse to do something he's not really capable of. It's important to recognize how much a horse can do and how much to ask of him. We need to recognize the slightest try, realize the slightest change."

—RAY HUNT

Bill Reynolds is the author of The Art of the Western Saddle and co-author of The Faraway Horses and Believe: A Horseman's Journey, both collaborations with Buck Brannaman. Reynolds lives in California's Santa Ynez Valley. For more information about the Ray Hunt memorial, visit rayhunt.com. Send comments on this story to edit@westernhorseman.com.