

The following is the presentation as read at the Hall of Fame induction ceremony:

Hall of Fame Interview 2012 Laurie Kristoff, DVM

Laurie was born in East Chicago, IN and grew up near Munster with her parents and a sister.



While growing up Laurie had a great deal of responsibility. She was surrounded by ambitious people and family. Her family ran a grocery store chain. Laurie started out at the young age of 11 helping in the family business. She started stocking shelves, worked in the deli and when she got a little older she became a price checker. In simpler terms, she was a spy! She would go into other grocery stores and check what prices they had on their products! Some store managers knew why she was there and left her alone, others she had to be very sly, using a recorder in her purse she would quietly whisper into her grocery cart the top secret information.

Laurie always had a passion for animals! She did not have horses from the start, but she had a strong desire to be around them. Her parents started taking Laurie on organized trail rides at Trails Bend Stables in Dyer, IN. Almost every Sunday you would find Laurie trail riding! Little did they know at the time how intense of a fire they would ignite in their then 8 year old daughter for horses. The more Laurie rode, the more she wanted to ride and be around horses. She thought about pursuing a career with horses, but she also knew she needed to make a little money too! That is when Laurie set her sights on becoming a vet. She started riding along with local vets to get some exposure and experience.

Years of begging her parents for a horse finally paid off for Laurie. It helped too that her parents had purchased a farm near Crown Point, IN. This is where the family would spend their evenings and weekends. This is where she would hone her riding skills.

She was 12 years old at the time she acquired her first horse. Her father spoke to a friend who also worked in the grocery store about looking for a horse. They had absolutely no experience in looking for a horse, let alone that 'just right' horse we all look for for our daughters! This friend helped them look all over. After looking and looking, her father's friend said that he has a horse in his barn that belongs to some people and they were thinking of selling. This horse happened to be a great fit with Laurie. And after all the time of searching for that right horse, they found him very close to home. This gentleman's name was Windey Blanchard – Mr. Blanchard helped Rich Kurzeja in promoting the Mid American Buckskin Horse Association of IN. Mr. Blanchard was instrumental in getting Laurie interested in the IBHA. He enticed her by showing her a very nice belt buckle telling her she could win one of those too!

Laurie just started riding, no formal lessons, she learned by trial and error. She found herself to be a natural with horses!

Laurie had one sister who had a love for horses too. Her sister started out with a pony when Laurie paved the way for them to get horses and her sister went on to ride Hunter/Jumper horses.

Before Laurie was able to go and horse show by herself, she would travel and watch. It took Laurie until she was about 17 years old to convince her parents that she needed to start going to horse shows. Finally convinced they allowed her to attend some shows at C J Ranch in Crown Point, IN ran by Carol Craig. She fondly recalls that her goal was to get a green ribbon. She started out and showed in everything, immensely determined to get that green ribbon. And guess what, she got it!! What color ribbon do you think she is after these days?

Laurie started out showing at quarter horse shows. Carol Craig, who is still an IBHA judge, would host quarter horse shows and IBHA shows. Luckily they were very close and she joined the MABA Youth Team. Finally Laurie was able

to get her own transportation. This outfit is just slightly different than what she travels with now. Her first outfit was an El Camino and a small bumper pull trailer. There was no stopping this determined teenager now!!

Laurie worked very hard to put points and titles on her horses. She admitted to struggling with showmanship. She would try and try. A sympathetic judge noticed her struggles and gave her some tips. She wanted to get her youth Championship on her horse Tejona K Beau, this was her first horse. She was on a mission and registered Beau in every breed association he was eligible for. Beau was good at just about everything, but western trail seemed to be what he excelled in. He was IBHA's first superior western trail horse. Beau lived to a ripe old age of 27 years a prime example of Laurie's great care.

Laurie's second horse was a mare called Eternal B Dun and purchased her in 1979. This mare was her first Supreme Champion horse. She is also the dam of Miss Marching Jack, who is one of her foundation broodmares and show horse.

She went down to Albuquerque, NM to compete for her first Dun-a-ramma Title. She remembers piling in a truck with other youth team members that included Mr. Blanchard's daughter for the long trip. Laurie later was crowned MABA Queen and traveled again to the Dun-a-Ramma to compete for IBHA's Queen Title. She was not able to take her own horse with her this time and she had gotten a ride with the youth advisor from MABA. She had asked the Queen Coordinator to borrow a horse to compete on for the Queen's Contest. She recalls that they participated in stall decorating and other activities, very similar to our WS now. Laurie fell in love with her borrowed mount she rode during the Queen's competition and ended up buying him. His name was Don Dunit. Thankfully she found a ride home for him with Rick Kurzeja.

During her show career she attended Purdue/Calumet for her first years of College, and then transferred to vet school at Purdue/Lafayette for an additional 4 years. And if you have paid attention, you will have realized that our over achiever, Laurie, accomplished many of her goals while attending a grueling vet school program! At school she always had 3 horses with her and made time to ride almost every day. Laurie would arrive at the boarding stable on a regular basis and if there was a chance that she could not make it that day she would need to call the owners of the stable otherwise they would worry about her. After 8 years of college she graduated in 1986. Once Laurie started showing horses she could not stop! Looking back today on her years in college, she is not sure how she accomplished it at all!

Laurie has continued to raise and show horses. Owning her own stallions, breeding her mares and showing her babies to many, many titles. She also offers boarding and training at her farm in Durand, IL.

Laurie's farm is known as Stagecoach Pass Farm and was established in 1986. It is well known for producing some of the nation's top Buckskin Quarter Horses. With the focus on All Around and performance bloodlines, these horses also excel in AQHA and NRHA competition, as well as being every day companions and working partners! Stagecoach Pass is home to about 26 horses. When Laurie first established her farm in Galena, the land was located on a Stagecoach trail so it seemed like a good idea to her farm. Within the last few years she has moved her farm location to Durand, IL. Little did Laurie know, when she relocated the farm, she found herself on another Stagecoach trail!

Laurie is proud of her accomplishments in the show arena, the breeding barn and training. Through it all she has gone to school to become a great veterinarian and has a booming practice.

She has competed in AQHA, IBHA, NRHA and ABRA sanctioned shows at the state and World Show levels. Laurie loves the challenge that comes with showing the all around horse and would rather show in every class her horse is eligible for.

Durand is where she calls home now – prior to Durand she lived in Galena, IL. No matter where she lives, she wants to be close to Chicago. Growing up her family spent a lot of time going dinner, attending basketball games, hockey games, you name it any sporting event and shopping. From where she grew up, it only took about ½ hour drive to get

to down town Chicago. Laurie is an avid Blackhawks fan and a Bear's fan – and we all know how hard that can be at times, but she never gives up on them!

Laurie is very dedicated to serving IBHA. Her favorite thing to do is helping out at the World Show and she has been helping and donating for 16 years as a sponsor. Laurie donates the custom silver saddle presented to the new "Miss Buckskin World". She also serves as a Ring Steward during the Warm Up to the World and the World Show itself. Some of her most memorable moments are showing her horses to an IBHA World Show Title. Her first World Show Title was in barrel racing. When asked to calculate how many WS titles she has, she could not count. I offered to take off my own shoes and socks to help, but she said that would not help! Laurie really enjoys the World Shows and being able to watch the show from the arena is very exciting and she does not miss the competition.

It did not take long for IBHA to notice Laurie's talents in the show pen and out. Laurie was asked to participate on the Abuse and Illegal's Committee. Her vast knowledge of drugs and legal dosages came in very handy. Laurie also is the President of the Youth Scholarship Committee. As if this was not enough, she also serves at IL's Charter Delegate. And just one more thing! Laurie has been an approved IBHA judge for about 16 years. One would think that this would be enough to tire anyone out! Not Laurie Kristoff, her comment was that this activity list is it for now, until someone asks for her to help in another adventure!

Laurie likes to travel and in the summertime is gone almost every weekend, either judging or showing. She enjoys driving and she recently drove to AZ, TX and LA for a vacation.

When Laurie is not horsing around or attending a hockey game, she will curl up with a good book or she may be cooking up a new recipe! That's right! Cooking! She loves to cook too.

I asked Laurie what she would like to do in the next few years, maybe see herself retiring? She can see herself backing off on some of her veterinary business. Ever since she moved to Durand, she has more business than she knows what to do with. She would like to decrease some of that work load so she can dedicate extra time to riding and showing. She cannot foresee making any major changes to her life. She enjoys everything she does. Eventually, if she is encouraged to retire, Laurie would like to spend more time during the winter months in NM. NM is where she spent a lot of her time after vet school getting more experience before setting out on her own practice.

Laurie has lived her life around the premise of being nice person and being an honest person. Life's Golden Rules! She is always ready to help of anyone calls. She strives everyday to be as hard working as possible and be the best veterinarian she can be.

Laurie, you inspire us with your work ethic and tireless ambition. We are proud to call you friend and are all the better because of your work with our Association.

Thank you for all you have done, all you do and we are looking forward to many exciting times in the future!!

