

LPSDC Founding Member

Eugene Anthony Dueber Jr. Lt. Col. Ret. USMC Naval Academy Class of 1940, of Manchester, WA, passed away Thursday afternoon April 26th 2012, surrounded by his family and friends.

In 2007, shortly after his retirement from showing horses, Tina Hansen & Diane Lenius sat down with Gene to hear about his love for horses and dressage.

We knew that Gene was a founding member of LPSDC, and we were curious to hear the details as we sat down for a chat with Gene on a rainy December day at his home in Manchester. He welcomed us to his home, and guided us past the wall of “family” photos featuring horse pictures, ribbons and trophies to some comfy chairs in the living room. We snuggled in with note pads and lap top in hand and were very interested to hear his “horse story”.

Here is what we learned...



A Wonderful Conversation with Gene Dueber

by: Tina Hansen and Diane Lenius

Gene always wanted to ride. He grew up in the city during the depression and was never able to have a horse. The yearning for a horse never disappeared. (As we all know, it is in the blood.) Gene married his Naval Academy sweetheart Dorothy in 1942. Gene and Dorothy had 3 kids; son's Eugene and Peter and one daughter Dorothy. He has 3 grandchildren and 5 great grandchildren. His daughter rode for a short period of time until she fell off in the black berries and broke her finger. One of his granddaughters rode until she went off to college.



Gene served in World War II and the Korean War. Gene finally was able to ride after he retired twice, once from the U.S. Marine Corps and second from facilities manager positions at several Universities in California, Ohio and Maryland. At the age of 60, he took up riding for the very first time at the Potomac Horse center in Maryland, where he rode all types of horses.

In 1982, he moved to Port Orchard to be closer to his family. He sold his MG that he had spent the previous 5 years restoring and bought his first horse, Bismark, in 1983. Bismark was a Thoroughbred. He got hurt in a trail riding accident when he was stabbed with a stick while in the woods. It got infected and unfortunately he lost him.

Then he bought Montezuma “Monte”, who was a heavy hunter type, bay Thoroughbred purchased from Delight Willing. Gene says “He was a great horse because he had done everything. Monte was my favorite horse”. Gene continued to say “I enjoyed riding Monte. We went trail riding, rode hunt seat and we started dressage, but Monte was not a dressage horse. He did a little jumping too. Monte was a good jumper, but I was past jumping age.” Monte died at the ripe age of 32. “He was a great horse!”



Gene was also very fond of VP Medley, an Arab mare that he owned. Gene bought Medley at an auction. Gene was just there to look and when he saw Medley his heart started pounding. It was Monte 1998 love at first sight and Gene had to buy her.

He bred her once. Unfortunately, her foal had scoliosis. He sold Medley to Melinda Thomas who won many awards on the mare over the years. Gene’s horses are like children to him. He stays in touch with them and their owners, often visiting the horses that live close.

Gene was a founding member of the Lower Puget Sound Dressage Club in 1990. It was originally a chapter of the Oregon Dressage Society and later became a chapter of EI. Gene was president for two or three years, then he was treasurer. He was also responsible for the shows and for the newsletter for a while. Gene has been very committed to advancing dressage in the Puget Sound area.

We asked Gene how they came up with the idea to start the Dressage Club and he told us the story. Gene had his horse at a stable where Michelle McFadden also boarded her horse. She started to give free dressage lessons and he decided that dressage was something that he wanted to do. One day he saw a beautiful white horse floating through the field and she was for sale. He bought her for \$600, her name was Karkal Cherub. After a while he moved his horse to Day Dreaming farm where he met other dressage enthusiasts. Gretchen Duff had just moved from Virginia with her horse.

They had Donna Longacre come up and had a ride and review clinic that drew a big group, so they decided they should start a dressage club. The founding members of the dressage club included Gene, Gretchen Duff, Kathryn White, Beth Vaughn, Tony and Cele Noble. Gene remains an active member of the dressage club after 17 years and has watched it grow from an idea to a membership of 68 people in 2007.

In 2001 Gretchen Duff encouraged Gene to compete for the Centurion award. This award is given to the horse and rider with a combined age of 100. He borrowed VP Medley from Melinda. The mare was then 15 and he was 85. They rode an Introductory level test at Sandy Kelly's Lazy K Stables, which earned them the award. The award was presented at Emerald Downs during the Region 6 Championships.

Gene has also been known for breeding horses. Every time we talk to Gene, he is done breeding horses and does not plan to breed again. Then we see him again and he has another foal. Gene explains this as follows "Because I couldn't ride for a while, I bred. I started with breeding Karkal Cherub to Constitution, a Holsteiner. (He took her to the Holsteiner inspections and she did well.) He bred her to him three times and got three fillies; Colonels Lady, Dionisya and Farasim. He also bred to Cicero another Holsteiner and produced a colt this time. He also tried breeding to Arabs. He bred 5 different mares to 2 different Arab stallions over 7 years and he only got one foal. "So I did better with the Holsteiners." He is very proud of Colonels Lady, aka Nellie. She is currently owned by Gene's trainer Dorothy Begley.



Gene has worked with many trainers over the years including: Joanna Herringstad, BJ Higgins, Michelle McFadden and Kim McGuire. His passion for the sport has included the development of some awards to encourage riders and breeders. Gene loves Arabians and sponsors a trophy through the Equestrian Institute. The perpetual Trophy is for the highest scoring Arab, Anglo Arab, or half Arab Dressage horse. BJ Higgins won the award in 2006. (No one won the award last year.) Due to his Marine Corps background, Gene named the award Tripoli which is sacred to the Marine Corp. I have heard there is no such thing as an ex-marine. Gene is a true reflection of that statement as he proudly told us the story of Tripoli.

Gene also gathered some friends to create the Constitution Cup following the unfortunate death of the stallion Constitution. The Constitution Cup is an annual award for the highest scoring Holsteiner. Gene has also been a member of the Kitsap Saddle Club, where he has been President for three years and a board member for many years. He was also a member of the Gig Harbor Horseman until it became inactive.

In recent years, Gene decided to try a smoother gaited horse. So he bought, Llamarada, a Peruvian Paso. At his last show in 2006, they placed 3rd in a large class at the Kitsap Saddle Club and that is when he retired from riding. He eventually sold Llamarada.

At 91, Gene is still very involved in horses. His 5 year old gelding, Alegandro, out of Nellie, is stabled at Northwind Stables and Dorothy is riding him. They plan to show at Intro and Training Level this coming season. He gets out to visit his horse every day, thanks to his son Peter, who drives him to the barn.



We appreciate Gene's contribution to our local dressage community and we welled up with tears as he talked about his favorite horse, Monte. According to Gene "He was my favorite horse. He was a nice riding horse and a real good friend and I had him for a long time." We can all relate to this feeling.

Farewell Gene...

