

The DeLong Family

Inducted 2008

Wisconsin history cannot be complete until the powerhouse family name of DeLong is somewhere in the books. Dominating three generations, the DeLong family has conquered many feats and has truly evolved with the harness racing times.

Brothers William "Bill" DeLong and Del DeLong began the legacy back in the 1950's. Bill switched his love of five gaited horses to the love of Standardbreds with the help of Hall of Famer and friend, Del Insko. Bill enjoyed great success over the years – especially at the trotting gait.

Del took an even more active role in harness racing as being an owner/trainer/driver wasn't enough for him. Del spent many years on the Wisconsin Harness Horse Association Board of Directors helping to promote racing in the wonderful state of Wisconsin. He also was voted as a District Director of the USTA.

The second generation of this family came as William's children Sally (DeLong) Amundson, Jesse "Jay" (Mary) DeLong, and William C. "Bo" (Vicki) DeLong, took the reins of the operation. Bill's other children who also dressed in silks: Ray, Charles, and Peggy.

Sally, along with her late husband Tom, enjoyed racing very much and took active roles in the breeding, training and racing of harness horses and she continues to do so.

Bo began his driving career in the 1960's to be shortly followed by his brother Jay. These two men head powerful stables and continue to dominate racing in the Midwest. Notably the trainers of hot two year olds, they often use Wisconsin racing as early preps for their young colts and fillies. During this time, it is not uncommon to see multiple DeLong trailers pull into the fairgrounds as they often bring more horses to the race meet than any other single stable. However, they do not waste much time as they send them south of the Wisconsin border to compete on the tough Illinois Fair Stakes Circuit always proving to hold their own.

The third generation is just barely beginning, but is definitely leaving their mark all across the United States. Jay and Mary's son, John DeLong left his mark last season as a pari-mutuel driver. John dominated the inaugural meet at Running Aces easily capturing the driving title and is currently driving on the East Coast. John's brother, Austin DeLong, made his debut driving on the Wisconsin fair circuit and proved he can keep pace with the family name by making into the WHHA's Top Ten Driving Club for 2008. Two other of Jay and Mary's son's, Ben and Eric, have yet to come of driving age, but are eagerly awaiting their turn as they warm up horses and help in the barn.

Bo and Vicki are also contributing to the third generation as their son William P. "Patrick" DeLong is also an accomplished driver on the Midwest fair circuit and also drives on the Chicago land racing circuit. His brother Chris is not far behind to challenge Pat for driving privileges.

The DeLong Family is a tight-knit family whose love for harness racing is instilled deep into their family roots. They have evolved and become more involved with every year that goes by. To show their family togetherness, they even conducted a matinee race in Mineral Point, WI called "The DeLong Pace." There were four entrants – all third generation DeLong children. With almost all four hitting the wire together, it proves that drive and competitiveness of the DeLong Family is here to stay.

Nominated by George Woodbridge