

The Magee Family

Inducted 2001

A horseman in the breeding business looks for families that get to the winners circle early and often, that dominate the one mile wars and can dig deep at the head of the stretch and finish strong. Bloodlines come and go, but only those with a solid foundation survive. When one draws a parallel to the domination of the Magee family in the sport/business of harness racing, those same traits can be found. They come from an Irish foundation. In this case, the forefather wasn't Hambletonian; he was High Magee, Jr. Hugh settled in tiny Angelica, located in Shawano County in Northeastern Wisconsin/ Hugh's day and night jobs were dairying, dealing in livestock of all kinds, and also cheese making. In his spare time he trained ole Roger Boy, probably his first Standardbred.

Of course, we know Hugh wasn't always working. He did find time to pass on his gene pool. The late Hugh and his bride, Irene (99 years old at the time of this writing) did have children. Daughter Joyce married Bill Scheider. Part of the deal was "get a horse." Bill and Joyce raced the good trotter, Shawnee Jim. Bill did some of his own driving. Their son, Mike, still trains a few at the home place in Shawano. Rosebrook Willie p, 1:54 and 4/5 is still in Mike's barn. Willie was one of the top Wisconsin horses racing in Chicago.

Hugh and Irene also had two sons. Curtis and his wife Orienne are the parents of Daryl (wife Pat, Keith, Dave (wife Kathy), Kevin (wife Kathy), and Dean (wife Kim), Daryl operated a public stable for years in Chicago. Kevin held a fair license but promptly gave it up after a puller gave him the ride of his life at a Michigan fair.

What else can be said about Dave and Dean? Dave, a recipient of three Hall of Fame awards and national and international recognition as a great driver, is also one of the finest gentlemen in the sport of harness racing. Younger brother Dean is perennially one of the top tail setters in Chicago. He too jet sets about North America driving some of the best equines in the sport.

Perhaps the catalyst of the whole racing family is Elwood. Elwood raced a few for Hugh as a teenager. It wasn't until later that Elwood took the chance of moving the racing from a hobby to a vocation. A pioneer at the Chicagoland tracks in the late 40's through

the early 90's. Elwood and his wife Elva managed to operate a public stable and raise a family. Not all the children fell in love with the sport, but they all had a role to play.

Their children include; Gary (wife Donna Kay), Dale (wife Carol), Randy (friend Evie), Sally (husband Dave Zander), Patti (husband Jeff Hitzler), and Brian (wife Nancy).

Elwood won horse races with what is often termed "common blood." He had the skill to "manufacture trotters." Contemporary horsemen/women have the advantage of well-tuned bloodlines. They don't have nearly the shoeing and balancing problems of those who preceded them. Elwood, with Hugh's guidance, was able to resurrect many horses that others gave up on. Elwood and Elva's children followed in his footsteps at different levels of interest.

Brian held a license and did some county fair driving. With his older siblings off and married, Brian did much of the jogging and training while Elwood was in Chicago. Brian ultimately chose police science over horse racing as his career.

Elwood and Elva's son Gary recently purchased the family farm in Shawano. When Gary isn't teaching architecture and drafting at Northeast Wisconsin Technical College in Green Bay, he is busy with the second love of his life, the horse operation. Of course, the first love is his bride, Donna Kay, who is there through thick and thin. In addition to training and driving, Gary also gives much of his time to the Wisconsin Harness Horse Association. His leadership, as a board member and President, doesn't go unrecognized. Gary and Donna have three sons; Corbin, Mike and Grady. Mike has shown the most interest in the horses. When he isn't working or doing a music gig, he can be found in the barn or on the track jogging and training.

The Magee family tree has other equine branches. Hugh's brother, Robbie, also raced a few horses. Another full-time successful horseman in the family is second cousin, Marshall Magee. Marshall operates a stable in Chicago. A recent claim, Star Leader, has proven to be a great buy. Marshall has done some adjusting and moved him up the condition ladder.

The male gender in the Magee family would be the first to say that many people made sacrifices to help them keep this racing tradition alive for so long. Any bloodline lives and dies with the quality of the moms. Whether it Elwood, Curtis, Dave, Dean, Daryl, Gary, and of course Hugh, none of them would have been able to succeed without someone behind him, giving him the support he needed. God knows the sport and business of harness racing can be a roller coaster ride. It is the women in the lives of

the Magee horsemen that are an integral part of this honor. Congratulations to a wonderful family.

Nominated by Carol Yohn