



### **Carol Harris**

Proudly “horse crazy” since childhood, Carol Harris became one of Florida's most prominent owners and breeders.

Born March 26, 1923, Harris was raised in West Orange, New Jersey. She was breeding and showing horses and dogs long before moving to the Sunshine State after friends in the Thoroughbred industry told her Ocala was *the* place to raise horses.

After one visit, in 1963 Harris loaded up her kids, 32 horses, about a dozen dogs and moved south. She fell in love with Bo-Bett Farm, a 400-acre Thoroughbred operation named after the original owners, Bowen and Bettendorf. Harris initially bought half partnership in the farm and kept the name even after buying out the remaining partner, Roy Bowen.

Harris had been showing Quarter Horses since the 1950s. One of her best broodmares was Judy Dell, who produced Eternal Dell, the first stallion Harris stood at Bo-Bett Farm in the late 1960s.

Harris also bred hundreds of champion Italian Greyhounds and Whippets and was one of the top breeders in the country.

When Harris was passionate about something, it was her nature to be involved.

She was one of the first women AQHA judges and was also an approved judge for the National Reining Horse, National Cutting Horse and American Horse Shows associations. She judged for 25 years and in 1981 was the first woman judge at the AQHA World Championship Show.

She was president of the New Jersey Quarter Horse Association and instrumental in establishing the East Coast Cutting Horse Association. She got involved in the FQHA shortly after moving to Florida and became president of the association.

“Mom loved the versatility of the Quarter Horse. That was her biggest promotion, and she was very influential with the FQHA,” says Harris’ daughter Wendy Winans, who worked at her mother's side for many years, assisting in all areas of the farm's business.

“We did some Quarter Horse racing while Florida had it. In fact, we got Really Rugged (TB) just to breed for racing, but then we found out his foals were so versatile; they could do a lot more than just run,” says Wendy.

Perhaps the most versatile of Really Rugged’s foals was Rugged Lark, the 1981 colt out of Alisa Lark. Harris bought the handsome bay colt as a yearling, and the rest is history.

Rugged Lark amassed 326 performance points in seven different disciplines, both English and Western, and was the first American Quarter Horse to win the prestigious title of Superhorse—in 1985 and again in 1987.

Rugged Lark became the backbone of Bo-Bett's breeding program, siring champions in both English and Western disciplines. He was the first Superhorse to sire a Superhorse, and two of his sons have earned the coveted title--The Lark Ascending in 1991 and Look Whos Larkin in 1999. Rugged Lark also sired Regal Lark, reserve Superhorse in 1993.

Harris graciously shared her beloved horse with everyone who wanted to meet him. From children to seasoned show competitors,

every year thousands of visitors stopped by Bo-Bett Farm to meet Rugged Lark in person. Harris welcomed them all.

Harris was inducted into the American Quarter Horse Hall of Fame in 1997; Rugged Lark was inducted in 2006.

Carol Harris was 98 when she died at home on August 7, 2021.