Noted Breeder Jones Named Ohio Hall of Famer

COLUMBUS, OH --- Hal S. Jones, who managed Pickwick Farms in Ohio in the 1950s and 60s, is the newest member of the Ohio Harness Racing Hall of Fame. He was elected by a vote of the Ohio chapter of the U.S. Harness Writers Association.

Jones, now in his 80s, played a major role in developing the use of artificial insemination in Standardbreds during his years at Pickwick Farm near Bucyrus. The demand for the services of the stallion Gene Abbe was so great that Jones had to find ways to inseminate multiple mares each time Gene Abbe was bred.

That resulted in experiments that proved successful and soon led to the widespread use of artificial insemination in breeding trotters and pacers.



Photo Credit: Mark Hall (USTA)

A native of Kentucky, Jones served in World War II and then assisted his father Walter in managing MacDot Farms, a Standardbred breeding and training facility outside Columbus, in the late 1940s.

He moved to Pickwick Farm in 1951 and stayed there for almost two decades, establishing an enviable reputation for his work ethic and horsemanship.

That led him to a position at Blue Chip Farms in New York in 1969, then getting established as a breeding facility. Jones took the 25-year-old Gene Abbe to Blue Chip with him despite the fact that many people felt the old stallion would not adjust well. Gene Abbe sired his best performer, Big Towner, at age 29, a year in which he served 32 mares at Blue Chip. Gene Abbe continued to breed mares into his mid-30s.

Jones moved to Hanover Shoe Farms and was there when Albatross entered the stud in 1972. He purchased a share in Albatross, an investment that rewarded him richly in the coming years.

Jones also managed Lana Lobell Farms before moving to New York to establish Cameo Hills Farm in Montgomery with his son Steve. That breeding and boarding operation has grown in size and stature and Hal Jones has watched his son's success with great pride.

Jones was inducted as a member of the Living Hall of Fame in Goshen, New York, several years ago and will be honored by Ohioans with Hall of Fame status at the Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association banquet in Columbus on January 19. Tickets to the OHHA banquet are \$45 per person and can be purchased by calling (800) 353-6442.

(Dean Hoffman)