

Kozlowski Welcomed into Hall of Fame



Hall of Fame Inductee Lea Kozlowski

The West Coast Reining Horse Association Hall of Fame award was established last year to honor those who have made significant contributions to the development and success of WCRHA over the years. This year we have chosen to honor Lea Kozlowski.

First, a little history. Back in the early 1980's, our beloved sport of reining was basically unknown on the West Coast. The big, open shows held stockhorse classes, and the Quarter Horse shows had a few reining classes, but participation was low. In 1982 WCRHA was formed with the help of some reiners from back East, who wanted to bring reining to the West Coast.

In its first six months of existence, the fledgling club made big plans to hold a Futurity in October of 1983. Numerous ads and articles publicized the dates and prize money. About that same time the 'back East' guys lost interest in running the club, and left

the other founding members stuck with a financial commitment they could not handle.

Enter Lea Kozlowski. Lea did not wish to see the new club discredited, and she also wanted to see this new discipline called reining get off to a good start. She offered a personal loan of several thousand dollars to WCRHA so the Futurity could go on, as advertised. The reputation of the club was saved, and reining was off to a good start on the West Coast. Without her help the association would have been dissolved in its first year of existence. She also allowed the club to repay the loan over time, without interest, which made all the difference in the world for a club that had no money in its treasury! Members held many, many roadside rummage sales to earn the money to pay her back.

Lea has always been a strong supporter of the reining horse industry, and she served on the WCRHA board of directors for many years. She has also been a director of both AQHA and PCQHA. Lea and her mother, Hilda Buck, helped organize the Central California Quarter Horse Association and the California Amateur Quarter Horse Exhibitors Association, two local associations in the Sacramento area - and both are still going strong, forty years later! Although Lea has supported and participated in many different equestrian disciplines over the years, she told us at the banquet that her true love is the reining and reined cowhorse events.

For her help in a time of crisis - above and beyond what was expected - and for her ongoing support for many, many years after that, we thank and we honor Lea Kozlowski and welcome her into the WCRHA Hall of Fame. 