



Welcome Bobby Smith to our Illinois Quarter Horse Association Hall of Fame

It may be a long way from McLean, Illinois, in the shadows of the Will Rogers Memorial Coliseum in Fort Worth, Texas, but Bobby Smith has never forgotten his roots. He may have grown up on a farm around soybeans and corn, but from the time Bobby was 7 years old, he was showing horses. He noted that his mother read every book or article about how to work with horses that she could find, and his dad applied the hands-on assistance, motivation and inspiration to help him reach his goals.

From Open and 4-H shows at the McLean County Riding Club and the Stock Horse Association, to becoming a member of the Illinois Youth team, Bobby worked hard at every level. He eventually competed at the All American Quarter Horse Congress in Columbus, Ohio, two times and the AQHYA World Championship Show in Tulsa, Oklahoma, twice representing IQHA. He has also shown horses in AQHA events as an adult.

Bobby admits that the many horse friends he met over the years inspired him and led him in his career path. He worked at horse shows for Tommy Manion during his time in Springfield, Illinois, and still connects with many of his friends that he showed with as a youth.

The Illinois Quarter Horse Association has a special place in his heart. Bobby served on the board of directors for several years, and he has been the emcee for this very awards banquet in the past. When Bobby's two daughters came along, they both showed with the Illinois Youth team for their entire youth careers. Bobby's wife Kelly also served as the youth advisor.

Perhaps Bobby's greatest legacy, however, is the support for the horse industry that he has provided through the companies he works for. Rod Patrick Boots recently became the official boot of the National Collegiate Equestrian Association for collegiate equestrian teams and is actively involved in the association's events, through Bobby's guidance.

CINCH Jeans is an active corporate sponsor of the National Snaffle Bit Association, including supporting the National Snaffle Bit Youth Association's jeans drive in 2019 as well as sponsoring the association's First 2 Finish Duel Trail contest last year. He has also supported horse shows at Gordyville and Du Quoin over the years.

"I believe in what the horse community does for people, and what it's done for me," Bobby said. "It's important for the folks who can make a positive impact to do so, to help keep these organizations

growing and thriving. I am blessed to do what I love for a living, and I'm blessed to work for companies that want to make a difference. I feel there is no organization any better for youth than the horse community, and I'm especially fond of that area of the business."

"Being named to the Hall of Fame is extremely unexpected and very flattering. I'm flabbergasted," he said. Bobby and Kelly live in the Fort Worth, Texas area, where Bobby serves as vice president of CINCH and operates the Rod Patrick Boots retail store in the Fort Worth.