

The California horse community loses a great friend.

Following a five-year battle with cancer, noted California horsewoman Nancy Reed, age 70, passed peacefully at home in San Diego County's Lakeside on February 26, surrounded by family and friends, with one dog between her feet and another at her side to comfort her passing.



Nancy Reed was born Oct. 31, 1946 in Omaha, NE to Harold L. and Virginia Middleton Reed, joining 4 year old brother, David.

Nancy attended schools in Hinsdale, IL and in Niskayuna, NY. Moving to the nearby historic hamlet of Vischer Ferry where she established a stable, Nancy graduated from Shenendehoah High School in Clifton Park, NY in 1964.

She was preceded in death by her parents, and by her older brother, David. She is survived by her younger brother Jonathan Reed and his wife Janet, of Arnolds Park, IA and her niece, Emily Vassar and her husband Sam of Marion, IA.

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Written by CRM

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And also by her much-loved pets Chopper, the pot-bellied pig, and dogs Mia, Milo, Little One, Baxter and Annabelle.

A celebration of life was held in Lakeside on March 13 for friends and students to commemorate the positive impact she made in their lives. Guests were invited to contribute to their local animal rescue shelter.

The Rest of her Story

It was often easier for Nancy to relate to animals rather than people—which did not stop her from being a successful horse-and-rider trainer to hundreds of beginning and adult riding students.

A natural athlete, she was born crazy about horses. And like most equestrians, she easily recalled the first time she ever sat on a horse. It was at Grandpa Reed's farm in Rinard, IA on a blind pony. She was a friend with her grandparents' neighbor Billy Winkleman, who provided ponies for Sears, Roebuck & Company, which back in the day sold ponies out of its catalog. She and "Billy Wink" stayed in touch for decades.

She even shared her love of horses with then-actor Ronald Reagan when he stopped in for a short visit to her family home in Hinsdale, IL.

In 1958, Nancy's family moved to Niskayuna in upstate New York. Horse jumping was in her blood, as she would practice jumping with the family's two dogs by making a series of makeshift fences in the living room and teaching the dogs to leap over broomsticks. Four years later, Nancy's family bought a five-acre farm in Vischer Ferry where they improved the barn and graded an arena to support Nancy's passion.

By the time she was in high school, Nancy was showing competitively all over the East, and competing at Madison Square Garden as a teenager. She got to ride and train with top trainer and judge Victor Hugo Vidal. While learning and riding, she was training horses and riders all along the way, and many of her friends became clients.

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