

## JIM HELZER

As a teenager living alone in a mountain ranch line camp, Jim Helzer liked his horses big and fast. He still does.

Serving in 2009/10 as the 59<sup>th</sup> individual to hold the rank of AQHA President. Helzer is one of the most successful horsemen to ever breed, own and race the fastest horses on earth. In 1990 Helzer bought Refrigerator, who won that year's All American Futurity (G1), became a two-time world champion and the only horse ever to win three runnings of the Champion of Champions (G1).

Born in Loveland, Colorado, Helzer grew up in northeastern Colorado, where they raised cattle and used teams of horses to farm. At the age of 4 he cultivated the family garden with a team of horses. They milked many cows (all or which he had broke to ride) to have a weekly income to buy groceries. His Father later managed a ranch at Carbondale, Co, where they ran cattle and sheep on owned, BLM land and on Forest Service permits.

After high school, Helzer studied for two years at Colorado State University and then married his childhood sweetheart, Marilyn. They have two children Kay and Jay and three grandchildren. He went to work in finance and then spent 19 years in the Defense Industry that took him, Marilyn and daughter Kay to England from 1968-1971. While in England we had the opportunity to watch some of the best TB's in the world. We watched Lester Piggot ride the great Nijinsky numerous times. We watched the Queens Gold Cup and many other Goup 1 races and the "Darby" in 1971. We also watched many Steeplechase races just to be near the horses.

After returning from England in 1971 they settled in Mansfield, Tx and continued to work in the defense business until 1979. June 29, 1979 we started a roofing contracting business then in 1982 started a Roofing Supply business that grew to over \$250,000,000.00 in revenue in 9 states with 33 distribution destinations.

In 1962 Jim and Marilyn bought their first racehorse. They spent most of the next two decades running cheap horses. Everything changed at the 1980 Ruidoso yearling sale when they paid \$8,000.00 for Hempens Jet, who became a stakes-winning earner of more than \$270,000.00 before selling him for \$100,000.00.

It was not long before Helzer was one of the best-known and most highly regarded horsemen in the industry. Helzer bred his first Quarter Horse in 1985 and since then has bred the earners of more than \$1.54 million.

His first good TB came from Brazil named Joe Who. Joe Who went on to win the Firecracker at Churchill Downs and the Eddie Reed at Del Mar. The next purchase was a partnership with Tom Durant named Wooden Phone. He won the Strub at Santa Anita and many other races. That purchase was followed by Euroears who won 6 races in a row including 3 stakes races at the Fair Grounds before suffering a condylar fracture. He was out of training for about a year and was sent to California to Bob Baffert's barn. Again he won several races including the Bing Crosby at Del Mar and was invited to participate in Dubai where he was second in the Golden Shaheen. He competed in the Breeders Cup Sprint and was retired to Stud at JEH Stallion Station in Oklahoma. In 2017 the Thoroughbred Association of Oklahoma named him the 2017 Leading Sire,

In 1994 Helzer established his first JEH Stallion Station which now stands leading Quarter Horse and Thoroughbred Stallions on its Oklahoma division at Wynewood, and the Texas Division relocated to Whitesboro where in 2010 he also opened JEH Equine Reproduction Specialists and Hospital.

Helzer is a past President of the Texas Quarter Horse Association, a past director of the Texas Thoroughbred Association, served on the board and as President of the Texas Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association and Chairman of the Texas Horsemen's Partnership.

Being on the Executive Committee of the AQHA for 4 years and then President was both an honor and privilege. I can't think of anything more that would climax a horseman's career. But I'm still looking for that next winner.

He was inducted into the AQHA Hall of Fame in 2015.