

1992 Barbara Worth Oakford



Barbara Worth Oakford dedicated her life to the world of horse shows, and especially to show jumpers. She began riding in 1924. In 1927, at age 14, she opened her own hunter-jumper training business. She soon became an elite competitor which she remained for over forty years.

Oakford's training barn was the cornerstone of West Coast horse shows for many years. During World War II, she and her clients traveled as extensively as gasoline rationing permitted, determined to keep horse shows from canceling.

During Oakford's many years of competition, it was common for her to win the top three, four, or five awards in jumper classes. She was also a highly respected American Horse Shows Association (AHSA) registered judge.

Among the horses Oakford developed were several world-class jumpers purchased by John Galvin and loaned to the USET. Perhaps the most famous

was Snowbound, ridden by Bill Steinkraus to the individual Gold Medal at the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City. Balbriggan, who won championships from coast to coast for 15 years, was another outstanding Oakford-trained horse.

In 1946, Oakford and other horse show industry leaders founded the Pacific Coast Horse Shows Association, of which she remained an Honorary Director into the 1990s. From 1959 to 1983, she captained the Barbara Worth Good Seat and Hands Medal competition, the first-ever jumper-type equitation class, whose year-end championship winners include Mary Mairs (Chapot), Susan Hutchison, Hap Hansen, and Anne Kursinski.

Oakford was named Horsewoman of the Year by three different associations: the AHSA (1962); the California All Breeds Award Association (1971); and the California Professional Horsemen's Association (1977). She was also honored with a California State Legislature Assembly Resolution and with Certificates of Commendation from the California Chamber of Commerce and State Fair Board of Directors.

