

Transitioning of a *Legacy*



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A special thanks to Cori Daniel's for asking me for years to author an article on my father, my hero, the legendary, Donald W. Jacklin.

One could argue that no single individual has influenced the mule industry like Don Jacklin. From being the pioneer and financier of the World's first ever equine clone, to getting mules onto racing tracks with approved pari-mutuel wagering throughout the United States, he is an influencer, ambassador, and all-around phenomenal asset to the mule industry. After several months, I was finally able to pin 81-year-old Don Jacklin

Don Jacklin with Czar, The Wonder Mule, now 28, who captured the California State 4D Gaming Championship, after retiring from the race track

down in his office where he continues to make big business decisions even today and grow the family company.

Don graduated from Washington State University with a degree in Agronomy. He is also a Veteran of the Navy, whereby he served as a U.S.

Navy Air Traffic Controller and Tower Supervisor. He has always enjoyed the great outdoors and the love of the equines. In his free time, he would hunt and pack in the Clearwater National Forest with his two brothers. One fateful day, they came by way of an outfitter named Bill Smith, who was riding a mule. He said, "Get rid of those horses. Mules pack more, ride longer, and have fewer medical

issues." Don and his friends bought a mule at an auction and they were hooked. He was instrumental in forming a regional mule club, the North Idaho Saddle Mule Club, which still thrives today.

As Don's love and interest of mules grew, he became familiar with Bishop Mule Days and one of their major events, mule racing, intrigued him. At that time, they allowed attendees to wager on the races. (Indio County was the first location authorized for pari-mutuel wagering on mules). An idea brewed in Don's mind. Colored mules were garnering a premium and if Appaloosa mules can run like quarter horses, there may be a dual-purpose

money-making opportunity. He embarked on an experiment of breeding loud colored appaloosa mules. Unfortunately, none of them could run well. He abandoned the color and started using top-notch racing quarter horse mares in his breeding program. Short distance/sprint racing was the goal at this time. Don bred his first race mule, Jeff McGee, and in his first start, he was the champion in Bishop.

Don set out to get higher quality, faster mules. He desired to identify quality genetics with proven genotypes and phenotypes and attempt to replicate. He approached Dr. David Tester and Dr. Gordon Woods at the University of Idaho about an Embryo Transfer project using the jack sire of the World Champion Race mule. Eggs from one mare were implanted into three different mares, a small Arabian,

mid-size Quarter horse, and large draft mare. The goal was to measure and compare recipient size to resulting performance plus other physiological internal factors (adrenaline, acidity, and hormones). All transpiring babies came out different sizes, but the scientific belief was they could replicate quality. There were very few embryo transfers done at that time. University of Idaho was the trailblazer. As interest and popularity grew in mule racing during this same time and the American Mule Racing Association (AMRA) was formed. Founding members Roger Downey, Jim Schleimer, David Wood, and Don lead the charge. It was decided that they would race all three of these embryo transferred mule babies as three-year-old's, as they do not allow mules to race at the age of two as their knees are not fully grown

in. All three raced in Bishop and the largest mule, out of the draft mare, won. It was a big race in Bishop and the project was awarded the Grand Marshall Award in the late '70s.

What to do next? Dr. Woods and Don wanted to do something that no other equine breed had done and to do it with mules. Cloning was being done at that time, like with Dolly the Sheep, but no one had cloned an equine. Mules are sterile, as we know. What about mule clones? Don became the pioneer and financier of what ultimately lead to the world's first-ever equine clone by way of a four-year project with the University of Idaho. This is how they accomplished this goal.

He partnered again with Dr. Gordon Woods, Dr. Dirk Vanderwall, Dr. Tester and Dr. Rustabake. They went to kill pens in Canada and the Pacific



Winnemucca June 01, 2003
BLACK RUBY.....\$900.....Place.....Show
FANCY.....
WINNEMUCCA MULE CLASSIC 2ND LEG
TAZ
Race#: 5 400 Yards 0:23.59
WINNER'S HOTEL & CASINO
TRIDENT



TAZ racing against Black Ruby. They were widely known as strong competitors on the race tracks and increased mule racing awareness and betting handles significantly

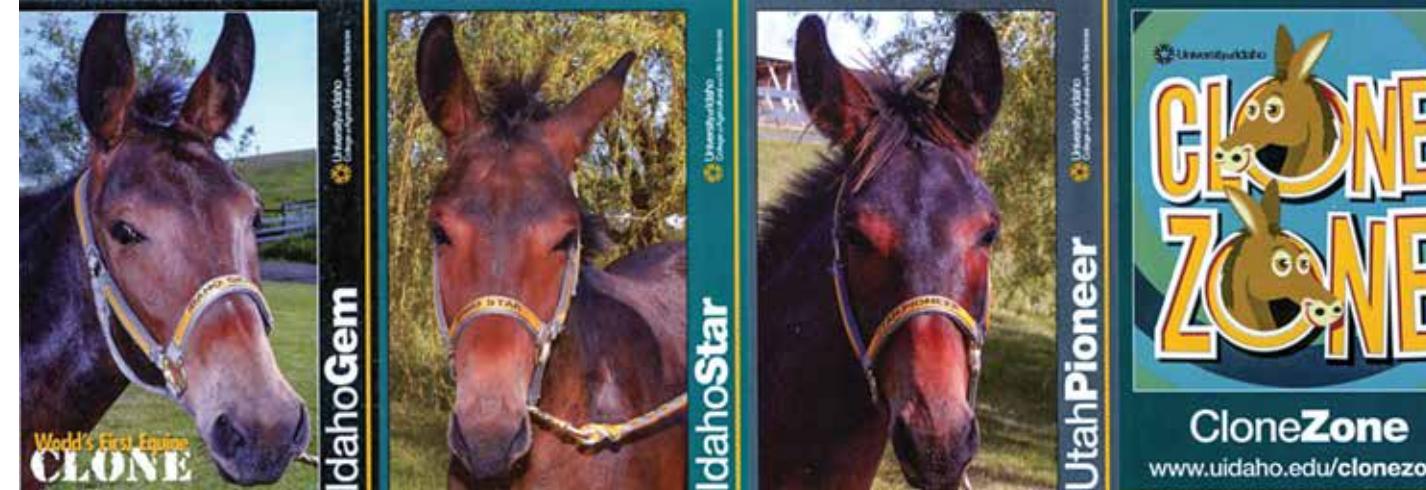
Northwest and made purchases of broodmares, 6-12 years old. The doctors checked their reproductive organs before purchasing. In the first year, they had 40 transfers and within two weeks, all aborted. They then used electrical stimulation of the harvested DNA egg, 40-50 transfers, 50 donor mares, 50 recipient mares. It was a 50% effective loss of transfers, and the same thing happened, they all sloughed. Dr. Woods tried vitamins and hormones in a petri dish. Three years of failures. Sitting together in a room, they came up with the idea that stimulating equine eggs would incite rapid cell division, similar to what is done in humans and can cause multiplication of cancerous tumors thereby increasing cell division. In order to incite this, you add zinc at certain levels, more calcium is released and available. Twenty mares took in twenty days under this process and it lasted longer. Three stayed in. They announced the 'World's First-Ever Equine Clone' a day before a scientist in France announced he had cloned a horse. This Cloning project produced the first, third and fourth cloned equines. (France was second).

Don earned an Honorary Doctorate degree from this project from the University of Idaho and all three cloned mules are alive and still thriving in the United States today.

Don Jacklin was a founding member of the American Mule Racing Association and has been President of this organization for over 15 years. Though mutual agreement, the Race division within the AMA separated for legislative and registry purposes, and formed the American Mule Racing Association.

This procedure is now a patented process under the University of Idaho, Clone2 enterprise. Later, Texas A&M would clone a quarter horse.

The cloning project garnered worldwide attention and stories were featured on the Today Show, in the To-



This promotional piece was widely distributed by the University of Idaho. Cloning the World's first ever equine put them on the map for years to come

ronto Globe, USA Today, and London Times. The scientific application is of greatest interest by way of possibly being able to remove levels of calcium and subsequent cancer research application. This research continued when Dr. Woods was recruited by Colorado State University. Subsequently, he passed away. Then the recession hit. It was quite expensive to clone and there were few customers. Left without their expert, Dr. Woods, the program, with regard to mules, came to an end. There is still cloning being done in the United States (like Charmayne James and Scamper), in Europe for Dressage and Jumping, and of course, the recent Polo Ponies being cloned.

Under his guidance and leadership, he has trained many multi-World Champions in Fast Track Racing, Endurance Racing, and CA State Gaming. He even showed Apache Ripper to the United States National ADMS Grand Champion Halter Mule, as a yearling in Roseburg, Ore., and then trained jockey and daughter Gayle, on this same mule, to four World Championships in Endurance Racing, setting a record for the fastest mule marathon ever run with a time of 1:32 minutes in Winnemucca, Nev. Apache Ripper also claimed the first ever Triple Crown in mule endurance racing, winning all three endurance races in Montana, Nevada, and Idaho in one season.

They needed a vehicle to carry forward their goals. This group was successful in the initiation and authorship of pari-mutuel race legislation in Idaho (First State in the Nation), Montana, Oregon, Nevada, Kansas, and Califor-

nia. Since there was a battle within the breeds in order to race on the tracks, they sold the emerging idea by saying "mules would bring increased audiences to watch races thus wager on the other breeds."

"Don Jacklin has been the quintessential leader and diplomat for mule racing in California. Under his role as president, we evolved from an organization of newcomers to one achieving parity with all other breeds on the Summer Fair Circuit. We owe our ability to race to Don Jacklin," said Kate Pharis, Executive Director, AMRA.

As for the state of the racing industry-specific to mules, people are coming to the tracks with large betting handles on the mules as they are an oddity. It has been a long time com-



Don with his family - left to right - Sequoia (granddaughter), Laurice (daughter), Gayle (daughter), Tyanne (granddaughter), and Reagan (great granddaughter)

ing, but mules are now welcomed on many tracks and have gradually been accepted. They no longer race Pintos or Appaloosas, and the quarter horse racing has dropped by 50 percent, all because of competition with internet wagering and Indian casinos (the single biggest factor).

Don continues to transition his legacy and love of mules by way of watching his offspring develop even more than himself, the positive factors of genetics, breeding, color, and performance: Daughter Gayle, with her unprecedented breeding program, utilizing elite and unique training talents; Daughter Laurice and granddaughters Tyanne and Sequoia, forging ahead in the performance and gaming arena; developing fast, great-granddaughter Reagan who served on the Royalty Court, alongside Sequoia, both on their retired racing mules.

What has been most satisfying to Don:

1. To see my daughters, granddaughters and great-granddaughter develop and carry on the mule legacy.

2. Go places and create events where no one else has gone before. Mule embryo transplants, cloning,



Don with daughter Gayle and Gemocha, the first baby from her breeding program