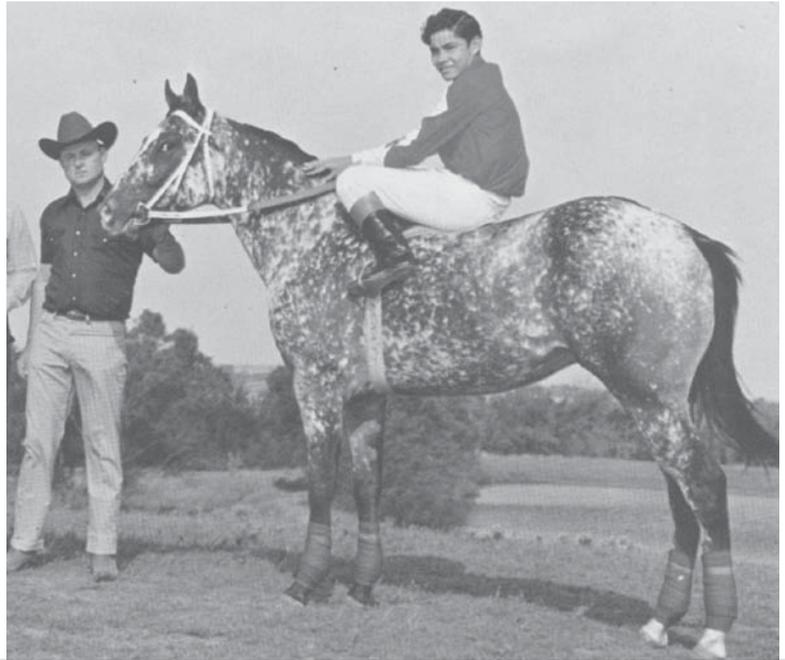


## Ralph Henley



The adrenaline of racing caught Ralph Henley's attention in the '60s, and it took him out of the show pen and onto the track. For a man who grew up with horses, it was another thrilling adventure.

During that time he bred, owned and raced winners of the World Wide Futurity, Texas Futurity, Cricket Bars Futurity, California Derby, Oklahoma Futurity and Oklahoma Derby.

"As he got older, he became interested in Appaloosas," says Imogene Henley, Ralph's wife of 63 years. "J.E. Baker was the one we got started with."

Their hottest Appaloosa superstar was Nellies Girl, a 1975 mare the Henleys bred and owned. By Priam's Joker (JC) and out of Vandy Tequila, Nellies Girl was a California favorite. "She was just so thrilling to watch race," Imogene says. "She wasn't a halter

horse, but a very well-balanced racehorse."

The mare won 14 of 26 starts and had lifetime pari-mutuel earnings of \$44,708. She set a track record in the California Derby in 1978, a 5-furlong race she finished nearly seven lengths ahead of the second place horse.

Another notable Appaloosa the Henleys owned was Whats Up Ghost, a 1968 gelding who won numerous stakes races and was inducted in to the racing Hall of Fame in 1988.

Much of their program was based on Pinetucky's Hootchie Patchy, a 1958 mare who didn't race but produced excellent racing offspring. Each of her five foals went to the track and earned a combined \$25,995.

Crickateer, sired by Cricket Bars, was a medallion-earning racer; Powder Smoke, by Wapiti's Haunta, was the Henleys' record-setting stallion and 1971 World Wide Futurity winner; Vandy Red Cloud, Vandy Tequila and Vandy's Brandy were sired by Blazing Vandy and made marks during Appaloosa racing's heyday. Vandy Tequila produced the record-setting speedster Wild Tequila.

The Henleys owned and operated Henley's Western Wear, located near Waggoner, Oklahoma. "We got to talk horses a lot," Imogene says. They sold the business in 1976. Imogene and Ralph had one son, Mike. Ralph passed away February 4, 2006.