

Long Island Loses its Greatest Equestrian Advocate

Charles William Uhlinger, Long Island's equine advocate and Rough Rider Troop Commander, died at the age of 66 from pancreatic cancer on October 3, 2011.

Bill, as everyone knew him, began his love of horses as a child and really took the plunge in 1974 when he and his wife Virginia, married in 1969, purchased a home with a stable in Syosset. Interestingly, neither Bill nor Ginny owned horses. However, it wasn't long before the stable was occupied by Max and Molson Golden, Bill & Ginny's first horses. In the following years Bill and Ginny would own even more horses including Murphy, Lexington, Tank and Gunny.

What to do with two horses? "All the things your mother wouldn't let you do or play with as a child" (Bill Uhlinger) I remember Bill saying this many times at Rough Rider and Cavalry reenactment events. Together, Bill and Ginny have pleased thousands of horse lovers by reenacting the American Revolution, Civil War, Spanish American War (Rough Riders) and World War I. Bill and Ginny have paraded, marched and reenacted with their horses in front of hundreds of thousands of people in the course of his long service as an equine ambassador. One of Bill's most favorite reenactment activities was performing for living history school programs. Bill & Ginny would visit numerous Long Island schools each year with the horses to demonstrate the life of the cavalry and allow children to interact with and develop a love and respect for horses.

Not limiting his joy of horses to military reenacting, Bill was an avid fox hunter and obtained his colors with Smithtown Hunt. He also loved to trail ride with his wife and was a frequent rider at the Muttontown Preserve and Old Westbury trails. Bill's passion for trail riding often led him to help his fellow riders in trail preservation and clearing. A member of all of Long Island's horse trail preservation organizations, Bill made it a lifelong goal to keep the trails open and clean for everyone to enjoy.

Bill and Ginny were also the founders of the "Vineyard Ride" Long Islands premier trail riding event held each year at the North Forks Vineyards. He and Ginny ran many events for the NSHA including the spectacular "Treasure Hunt" at Muttontown Preserve. Together, they started the Shoreham Series for Smithtown Hunt and ran several of the Hunt's balls.

A tireless advocate for the Long Island horse community, Bill led the Nassau Suffolk Horseman's Association for twelve years as its president. Long after his term as NSHA President, he continued to tirelessly promote and represent the interest of equestrians at uncountable meetings, zoning boards and legislative sessions. Bill was the perfect equestrian advocate. As a Nassau County Assistant District Attorney and prosecutor, he was truly an impressive influence in everything he chose to champion.

Bill always gave of himself for the benefit of the equestrian community. He believed in and fought for "Long Island is Horse Country"

C. William Uhlinger is survived by his beloved wife Virginia Uhlinger, his parents Betty & Charles Uhlinger of Hockessin Del., and sister Dr. Chris Uhlinger a veterinarian in Pennsylvania and North Carolina.

Frank Bradford