



THE MUELLER RECORD

SUMMER 2009 NEWSLETTER



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KATHRYN JANE MUELLER 1941 – 2009

This issue of the Mueller Record is entirely dedicated to the memory of Jane Mueller, without whom the Hieronymus Mueller Museum would not exist. Thanks to her efforts, we and future generations will enjoy the record and history of the Mueller Co., its employees, and the family who founded it.

KATHRYN JANE MUELLER

Kathryn Jane Mueller (1941-2009), passed away in her home on June 6, 2009 following a brief illness. Jane was the great granddaughter of Hieronymus Mueller, granddaughter of Adolf Mueller and daughter of William Everett Mueller. She is survived by her brothers, William E. Mueller, Jr. and Adolf Mueller.

Jane had four great loves in her life – horses, travel, sports and the Hieronymus Mueller Museum. Additionally, Jane was active in the Christian Science Church, collected contemporary art dealing with the American Southwest, and supported conservative political causes. Her schedule of activities and travels seemed exhausting to any outside observer – Jane gathered no moss.

Jane's interest in horses began with riding lessons at age 8 and progressed to competitive riding in her teenage years. Her interest eventually evolved into a business enterprise, buying, breeding and showing horses. Through the years, Jane worked with a variety of horses but settled on the American Saddlebred as her favorite and produced many great champions. As age began to take some of the charm from riding and showing her horses, Jane developed an interest in Hackney Ponies which allowed her to continue in the show ring. Again Jane produced a string of notable champions. Jane was well known and respected in national horse circles.

Jane's interest in travel was put to practical use when she opened and operated a travel agency in Decatur for a few years. Jane moved on to more romantic travel adventure, becoming the travel excursion director on a number of cruise lines. This allowed her to travel, guide shore tour groups, and meet interesting celebrities, educators, and adventurers around the world. After leaving the business side of travel, Jane continued making annual visits to England where she enjoyed the country life. Her love of voyaging led her to work at least one cruise into her schedule each year with her latest trips being aboard the sailing ship, *Sea Cloud II*.

The St. Louis Cardinals were Jane's favorite in the professional sports world. One of her prize possessions was an inscribed photo of Stan Musial who was not only a pretty good ballplayer but also a horse owner. Jane had an even greater passion for University of Illinois football and basketball – she was a booster and season ticket holder. She would schedule her time at her Arizona winter home to allow attendance at the "big" games in Champaign. Actually, Jane loved all competitive sports and made sure that wherever she might be in the world, she would have access to the major sports channels.

Jane was proud of Mueller Co. which her great-grandfather Hieronymus had founded and when the challenge of preserving the company and family history fell to her, she seized the opportunity. Jane, together with Vi Staley, assembled a collection of artifacts destined to be cast off by the new owners when the family sold the company in 1986. Using that core collection, they moved towards the opening of the Hieronymus Mueller Museum in 1994. Jane then spearheaded the effort to build and open the new museum facility in 2004 – a museum which is truly her legacy to us all.

HIERONYMUS MUELLER MUSEUM PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Jane Mueller led the effort to form a Mueller Family Foundation with the goal of building and maintaining a museum for the preservation of company and family history. There is no doubt that the effort resulted in a great success – we are all tremendously proud of what has been achieved. Jane's passing is a huge loss and brings with it the need for a certain amount of change. The original Board of Directors for the Hieronymus Mueller Family Foundation was formed by Jane Mueller, John Scot Mueller and Vi Staley. For the past several years, Jane Mueller, John Scot Mueller, Mark Staley, Michael Mueller and Betty Wheatley have made up the Board's membership although, as President, Jane carried the burden of keeping the organization going. The immediate consequence of Jane's passing is the need for a reorganization of the Board of Directors. Jane's spot on the Board has been filled by her nephew, Peter Mueller (son of Adolf and great-great-grandson of Hieronymus) who will join the other current members. The new Board will need to take a more active role in defining the mission of the Foundation and pursuing its goals.

The Kathryn Jane Mueller Gallery. The new board has determined that all memorial gifts to Jane will be applied to the completion of a new gallery space on the second floor of the museum and that the gallery should be named in Jane's honor. A number of gifts have been received and will be acknowledged on a dedicatory plaque. The unfinished space on the second floor will be divided into a small kitchenette / work space and an 800 square foot gallery which will add about 20% to the total museum exhibit area. Some of the gallery space will be used to display a small part of the memorabilia Jane has left to the museum and the remainder of the space will be used for the growing collection of artifacts including many items from Mueller Lodge which the museum currently does not have space to display. Initial plans for the new gallery should allow dual use of the space as a meeting room with exhibits on the outer walls. It is hoped that this project will be completed by Spring of 2010.

A secure future for the Museum. The Board of Directors anticipates that the endowment and annual revenues of the museum should make continued operations possible for many years to come. The challenge will be simply to maintain the interest of current and future generations of family members, company retirees and employees, and the Decatur community. To meet that challenge, the Board has tentatively agreed to the establishment of a website with the goal of eventually creating a "virtual museum" online, recognizing that the museum may partially be able to serve its purpose without the physical presence of visitors. Jane has left a strong foundation upon which to build and we look forward to continuing that process.

EXHIBIT OPENS IN MEMORY OF JANE MUELLER

An exhibit titled "**Kathryn Jane Mueller, A Life Well Lived**" was opened to the public on August 8 and will continue through the end of this year. A public reception was held on that Saturday with a second event on the following Monday for Jane's friends from her horse interests. The exhibit features a sampling of the horse memorabilia which Jane has left to the museum as well as some travel and sports memorabilia which the estate has loaned to us. A special thanks is due to Shirley Parkinson and her daughter, Vicki Whitmer, who loaned items, polished saddles, identified photos, and got the word out to the horse community. If you are able, take time to visit the exhibit and sample a bit of Jane's world from champion horses to the very important bar of dark chocolate candy.