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Sonoma County Fair Honors Nancie Carlson with 2017 Award of Excellence in the Horse Industry

Longtime owner of Santa Rosa Saddlery and fair volunteer shaped industry, built community

SANTA ROSA, CA – June 7, 2017 – Nancie Carlson’s story is a living example of how following your passion can lead to great things. She started life as a little girl who adored horses—not so uncommon—and grew that passion into an uncommonly successful business. Moreover, Carlson gave and continues to give of her time tirelessly, providing a lifetime of leadership in the equine industry and helping to form and maintain the vibrant horse community enjoyed in Sonoma County today. The Sonoma County Fair is pleased to present the 2017 Award of Excellence in the Horse Industry to Nancie Carlson.

A gifted horse and business woman from early on, Nancie Carlson was pretty young when she entered negotiations with her folks to trade her Brownie Camp money to buy a horse.

“I’ve been in love with horses my whole life,” says Nancie. “I won that trade with my parents and from then on I rode my horse, bareback, practically everywhere— even to school.”

Carlson was raised in the rural Oakland hills and spent her high school years working at a stable, leading rides and hay wagon parties. Each fall and spring, for over 30 years now, she’s worked on a ranch in Nevada to gather and process cattle. Throughout her life, she’s raised horses for breeding, pleasure and competition.

Nancie moved to Sonoma County in the early 1970s and was selling and repairing saddles and tack out of her home. By the ‘80s, she decided to make a true business out of it and opened her successful Santa Rosa Saddlery. This led her to join a number of Ag programs and to become a leader among Sonoma County’s equine community, providing tireless support of the Sonoma County Horse Council, the Petaluma Riding and Driving Club, the Western Cow Horse Association and the Sonoma County Fair. She has volunteered for Farmers Day for 28 years and is this year’s chair of the Farmer’s Day Committee.



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“I just love it” says Nancie. “Farmer’s Day is a chance for families to learn about animal husbandry, farming and agriculture—everything I love!”

These days, Nancie and her husband Jim, formerly of Santa Rosa; are loving retirement—and riding— on their ranch in the foothills of Yuba County. The whole family, including kids and grandkids, continues to enjoy Farmer’s Day at the Sonoma County Fair as an annual tradition.

The Sonoma County Fair is proud to present the 2017 Award of Excellence in the Horse Industry to Nancie Carlson. The Fair celebrated the honor during its annual Awards Ceremony on Tuesday, May 23 at the Fairgrounds. Carlson received the award and trophy, designed by Keith Christie and donated by the Sonoma County Trail Blazers. She will also be recognized on Farmer’s Day at the Fair, Sunday, August 6 in Chris Beck Arena.

Every day is a holiday during “Holidaze at the Sonoma County Fair!” Get ready to celebrate from August 3 – August 13. You won’t want to miss this year’s FREE Community Concert Series, the thrill of live horse racing, excitement of an ALL NEW giant carnival, nostalgia of “Holidays in Bloom” themed flower show, live entertainment, incredible food, fun contests, new games and more. For details, visit SonomaCountyFair.com or call (707) 545-4200. Like us on Facebook, and follow us on Instagram and Twitter to keep up with the fun. See you at the Fair!

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