

WILLIAM E. (BILL) COLLINS - 1924 – 2013

Bill was born in Big Valley, AB. in 1924 to a ranching family. He finished school in 1939 – and carried on farming with the family. He had a career in Rodeo from 1946 to 1960 – won 4 Canadian Calf Roping Championships, plus three runners-up. Bill also participated in Chuck Wagon Races – as a driver and outrider, helping win several Championships. He was also a Chuck Wagon Race Judge for several years, and eventually started showing cutting horses in 1956.

Bill started Leecoll Stables in 1958, and it became the focal point of training both horses and riders. He also conducted clinics across Canada, England and Australia. In 1962 Bill spent two weeks at Chunky Woodward's Ranch at Douglas Lake, BC with Prince Philip, giving him western riding and cutting instruction. They became great friends and in 1964 Bill participated in the Canadian Cutting Horse Tour of England with the Royal Family as hosts.

Bill won the Canadian Cutting Horse Futurity in 1967, 1972, 1983, and was runner-up on many occasions. In 1974 he won the Canadian Novice & Open Championships on "Peponita", who was a son of "Peppy San". In 1985 he repeated the same feat on "Pretty Pam San", who was a daughter of "Peppy San". Bill won the Canadian Novice Championship 15 times, and the Canadian Open Championship 12 times. In 1966 Bill placed in three events at the Edmonton Rodeo, roping (2nd), cutting (3rd), and show jumping (1st). Bill was the President of the Canadian Cutting Horse Association from 1979 to 1981, and was made an honorary Lifetime Director. In 1984 Bill was awarded the Alberta Achievement Award from Premier Peter Lougheed. In 1987 Bill was inducted into the Canadian Cutting Horse Hall of Fame. In 1990 he was inducted into the Canadian Rodeo Cowboys Hall of Fame and followed in 1995, by being inducted into the National Cutting Horse Hall of Fame, the first Canadian to receive this award. In 1996 he was awarded the "Order of Canada" from the Governor General of Canada. In 2007 Bill was inducted into the American Quarter Horse Association Hall of Fame, the only non-American to achieve this award.

In 2008 he and Pearl were invited and visited Prince Philip at Buckingham Palace, London, England. Bill took his album of the "European Tour" and Prince Philip remembered every rider's name that has participated.

A legendary "Horseman" and a friend to all. He never forgot a name, and always acknowledged everyone with a firm handshake. Bill was a wealth of information, remembering every horse and rider that he had known or instructed during his long equine career. Bill passed away in 2013 at the age of 89.