

Maryland Judge: Barbara Kirchner Magrogan Celebrates 50 Years as a Horse Show Judge

The Secretariat Connection

by Barbara Kirchner Magrogan

Barbara Kirchner Magrogan has always had a soft spot for Thoroughbreds. From owning and showing a few to photographing morning workouts at the track, she feels the Thoroughbred will always be the love of her life in the horse world. She shared with us a story about her connection to Secretariat and his people.

In 1973 I attended the Preakness with a bunch of friends from Marshwood Stables. We bought general admission tickets that day and went inside the grandstands to try and find a spot. By the time we stopped and by the grace of God, guess who was standing next to me? Jim Nabors who happened to be singing the National Anthem that day.

He and I struck up a conversation and he was happy to have someone local talking with him because he knew no one and was on his own. We chatted for a while and then they called him down into the paddock to head out on the track, so he says to me, "Come along with me." So I did, and all my friends thought I was nuts, but I headed down into the paddock. I went right behind Jim because they all thought I was with him and he pretended like I was!

I went to stall #3 with him and it was then I got to actually pet Secretariat and met Penny Chenery, Ronnie Turcot & Lucian Laurin. Then as suddenly as it started, it was over and Jim went outside and I headed back up to my friends. Of course they all were so jealous!

I followed Secretariat the rest of his racing days but it wasn't until 2010 that I reconnected with the group on the occasion of Secretariat's 40th

birthday celebration at The Meadow in Virginia. I got a private meet and greet with Penny, Kate Tweedy (Penny's daughter, who now runs the Secretariat Foundation), Ronnie and Charlie Davis (Secretariat's exercise rider who went everywhere with him) that night and our friendships took off from there. They took me into the fold because of my wonderful story and the rest is history as the saying goes.

From that moment on and even today, I am part of the Secretariat.com group and have traveled with them all over the country. Charlie and I became very close friends and I ended up being his caretaker, I guess you call it, and would travel with him to the events to make sure he got there safely. Sadly as everyone knows, Penny, Charlie & Bill Nack (the reporter who wrote the book *Secretariat: The Making of a Champion*, which was turned into a feature film by Disney) all passed away within months of each other a couple of years ago.

COVID put a stop to all of our Secretariat events last year and looks like this year so far will also have canceled events. We all are a close knit bunch and look forwarding to seeing each other one day again.

Charlie was born in South Carolina and got his start with racehorses when he was about 16 years old. I brought him over to Aiken, SC, in 2013 to meet Cot Campbell of Dogwood Stables. Campbell's last great racehorse was Palace

Malice, who won the Belmont in 2015. These two icons had never met each other and I was privileged to facilitate that meeting. They became fast friends and Charlie visited Aiken several more times over the years.

So that's my Secretariat story in a nutshell. Not too exciting, except to me!



Barbara Kirchner Magrogan with long-time friend Charlie Davis and horses Mac and George at Ofasaga South in Aiken, South Carolina in 2013.