

# Paige Kincaid

by Doreen Shumpert

Each year, the NYCHA (National Youth Cutting Horse Association) offers various awards and scholarships to its members, one of which is the Todd Drummond Memorial Award. It recognizes youth who are a cut above their peers in areas like scholastic achievement, extracurricular activities, and cutting horse involvement. The recipient receives a trophy buckle at the NCHA Futurity each December in Fort Worth, Texas.

This year's honor goes to 17-year-old Paige Kincaid, who lives with her mom Kyle and dad David in Peoria, Arizona. Interestingly, her parents don't cut and aren't involved with horses. The family owns a development consulting business that keeps both David and Kyle busy. And, Paige is also an only child, so the cattle and fellow cutters are the only "competition" she's had to worry about.

Paige got her start in the saddle as a little girl; like most, she was horse crazy. Her mom used to stop down the road and let her feed carrots to a neighbor's backyard horses. Then, she got to go on a short paid trail ride, and that was it.

"I was hooked," she laughed. "It was maybe a 10-minute ride into the woods. But my grandpa knew somebody that gave lessons and I got started. Mom thought I would be too small and too young, but I wasn't."

Paige started out competing on hunter-jumpers, and has also done some reining and reined cow horse classes over the years. She's a member of several horse organizations, including the Arizona Cutting Horse Association,

Pacific Coast Cutting Horse Association, American Quarter Horse Association, National Reined Cow Horse Association, American Quarter Horse Youth Association and National Reining Horse Association. But cutting has emerged as her true love, and she's been involved with it since she was 13.

"My dad knew some people from the gym that had a trainer at their house," she explained. "He was mainly a reined cow horse trainer, but he had a flag set up and put me on it. I stayed with him for about a year, then switched to riding with Mike Wood in Scottsdale, about 45 minutes away.

"At that time, Mike didn't have as many clients as he does now," Paige added. "I'd seen him at the shows and we talked to him, and I was lucky enough that he took me on."

These days, Paige still rides with Wood and cutting is her only focus. She's earned numerous awards aboard her 10-year-old gelding, Dee Acre Doc, or "DJ." At press time, the duo was leading the \$50,000 Amateur standings for 2007. They have ended up in the Top 15 of the youth the past two years, with numerous championships inside the pen.

Outside of the arena, Paige has been active and an honor society member/officer at school and FFA, a volunteer with a special needs program called Horses Help, and First Vice President and two-time Secretary/Treasurer of the NYCHA. When she isn't horseback, she enjoys hanging out with friends, swimming and watching movies.

Currently, the high-school senior is thinking about college and shopping for schools, hoping to major in either pre-vet or agricultural science. She plans to stick with cutting as much as she can amidst her college schedule, and may even try her hand at training cutters in the future. No matter what the future holds, she'll never forget her experiences in the cutting horse world.

"I love cutting; I love the people and the way the horses think for themselves," she shared. "I loved being an officer, it was a lot of fun, I got to travel and attend the Eastern Nationals in Jackson, Mississippi. If I hadn't been involved in cutting, I would never have gotten to do that, or make all these new friends, or meet all the people I've met. And, I learned a ton of responsibility, because this is such a big organization, you have to be on top of everything."

Best of all, she's learned important life-long lessons that will serve her well, no matter where the trail leads.

"The most rewarding experience is being involved in an organization that is committed to promoting leadership skills and composure in tough situations," she said. "Cutting is about so much more than simply going into the pen and showing; It's about character." ★

