



Direct Media Inquiries To:
Susan Watt
Cell: (817) 313-4818
s.watt@innovadorllc.com

NATIONAL CUTTING HORSE ASSOCIATION FOUNDATION UNVEILS BRONZE HONORING HALL OF FAMER BUSTER WELCH AT FIRST ANNUAL WESTERN HERITAGE CELEBRATION

FORT WORTH, TEXAS (December 12, 2019) – The National Cutting Horse Association (NCHA) Foundation announced today that cutting pioneer Buster Welch, along with his horse, the King Ranch’s iconic Peppy San Badger (Little Peppy), were immortalized in a larger than life-sized bronze statue unveiled on December 11. The presentation was held during the first annual Western Heritage Celebration in conjunction with the NCHA World Championship Futurity.

NCHA officials, local dignitaries including Fort Worth City Council Mayor Pro-Tem Dennis Shingleton, actors Robert Duvall and Barry Corbin, King Ranch Horse Division Manager James Clement, as well as numerous family members, friends and fans, were on hand for the event.

“One of the NCHA Foundation’s main areas of focus is historical preservation. Mr. Welch and the King Ranch and Little Peppy are icons of our sport. Who better than these legends to represent the sport of cutting and the cutting horse,” said Julia Buswold, NCHA Foundation Manager of Programs & Operations.

91-year-old Welch is a member of the NCHA, American Quarter Horse Association and Texas Cowboy halls of fame. He won a record five NCHA Futurity titles (1962, 1963, 1966, 1971, 1977), as well as four NCHA World championships (1954, 1956, 1974, 1976).

The impressive statue of Welch and Little Peppy cutting a Santa Gertrudis cow, took three years to complete and was sculpted by Kelly Graham of Weatherford, Texas. A former professional cutting horse trainer, Graham is now a full-time artist.

“The bronze is a well-deserved tribute to a man that had the forethought and knowledge to help promote and develop the idea of cutting as an actual sporting event,” Graham said.

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The Clement family, in honor of the historic King Ranch where Welch led the training program for years, made the lead gift. Rex Tillerson and his wife, Renda, also donated.

In the summer of 2020, the bronze will be placed on the grounds of the Will Rogers Memorial Center, outside the Gate 42 entrance off Trail Drive where competitors and their horses enter daily.

The Western Heritage Celebration also featured an auction, including a special cameo for the highest bidder and their horse on the hit TV show Yellowstone, thanks to Creator and Executive Producer Taylor Sheridan. The auction raised more than \$160,000 to support the NCHA Foundation and its ongoing endeavors to support the National Cutting Horse Association and the cutting horse community through programs including youth and scholarships, animal welfare, historical preservation and promotion of the sport of cutting.

About the National Cutting Horse Association (NCHA) Foundation

As the charitable arm of the National Cutting Horse Association, the NCHA Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The foundation directly supports the NCHA and the cutting horse community through endeavors to educate our youth, protect the horse, preserve our past and secure our future. For more information on the National Cutting Horse Association Foundation, please visit www.nchafoundation.org.

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