

Naming Rights



Corporate branding in a Quarter Horse world.

AMARILLO HAS A NEW MULTI-EVENT CENTER. Called the Amarillo National Center, (after the bank that donated the lion's share of the money) the facility replaced the old coliseum and sits next to the building that has housed the vast majority of equine events in the city for the last 30 years.

That building's still there and it has a corporate name too, of sorts. Named after Bill Cody – no, not the buffalo hunter and famed showman – *this* Bill Cody was king of a different arena.

In the 1950s, Amarillo halter horseman Glen Casey owned several top champions. One of them was a mare named Wilson's Little Slippers, a mare that excelled in conformation classes. Problem was, she kept getting beat by a dappled dun mare named Jole Blon S. So Casey figured the best way to jump to the head of the class was to buy "Jole."

Sure enough, "Little Slippers" stood reserve to "Jole" at her first show under new ownership.

"Jole had been beating me long enough," Casey said. "The first ribbon she ever won was at the 1947 Amarillo Tri-State Fair. I remember well, because I had four fillies in the same class. It sure made me feel good to know I owned her at last when she beat Slippers. My losing streak stopped in a hurry."

In 1950, Casey showed Jole in Albuquerque, New Mexico, to a veterinarian from Killeen, Texas, named Darrell Sprott. Sprott used her as reserve. But he later sent Casey a letter inviting him to send Jole down

to breed to his stallion Bill Cody – for free.

Bill Cody was a 1944 product of the King Ranch's line breeding program. He was by Wimpy P-1 and out of a daughter of Old Sorrel. The chestnut stallion was bought as an unnamed 2-year-old by Joe "Watt" Hardin of Fort Worth, Texas.

Hardin showed the young stallion to halter championships as a 2- and 3-year-old at the 1946 and 1947 Fort Worth Livestock Show and Exposition. He also had Bill Cody broke to ride and, by all accounts, he made a good calf roping horse.

Hardin sold Bill Cody to Doc Sprott in the fall of 1950. Sprott campaigned his stallion throughout 1951, earning championships as far away as California over the top horses of the day.

Unfortunately, Sprott was killed in a car accident in the fall of 1951 and wasn't able to realize Bill Cody's full potential.

Casey purchased the then 7-year-old stallion in 1952. With Jole Blon retired to produce Bill Cody foals, Casey hit the road with the proven stallion.

In 1952, Bill Cody was shown 11 times,



taking nine grand championships, two reserves and 38 points, and he became the first AQHA Honor Roll (High-point) Halter Horse in history.

Bill Cody not only left his name on the history books for his high-point title. In 21 foal crops, Bill Cody sired 255 registered foals, with 103 earning points in AQHA shows with 12 AQHA Champions,

He died in 1966 from colic.

Thanks to his last owner, Glen Casey, his name lives on through his lineage. Plus, Casey understood naming rights a long time, and a lot better, than Enron ever did. He paid to have his stallion's name on that building in Amarillo, and it's still there 30 years later. □