Bob Mielke

In 1969, a friendly wager took place. Knowing the people involved, I assume the big talk began in a tavern and was fueled by alcoholic libation. One party bet another party that his polo pony could not complete a 50 mile endurance race. The cocky polo player took the bet and attended the South East Minnesota ride. When he pulled in to camp, he took one critical look at the skinny, crooked-legged Arabs and knew he'd not only win the bet but probably the race. Almost 12 hours later, our polo player crossed the finish line dead last and won his bet. Can one be filled with triumph and humility at the same time? He also won a new respect for those skinny Arabs and for the sport that they dominated.

As the years passed, our polo player became a champion endurance rider. It is said that he was first to get the bright idea to put a wooden spoonful of salt in his horse's mouth during a race to encourage him to drink water. It is also said that he was the first to add soaked beet pulp to his horse's slurry. His great horse, Smoke, was the first recipient of UMECRA's Rider's Choice Award. He has raced or crewed at almost every high profile race in the country. He has mentored two generations of distance riders. He is always willing to help, but make sure you are ready for an honest answer when you ask him a question. His trademarks are his blue hat and his kick-ass martinis. His favorite entertainer is Frank Sinatra, and like the Chairman of the Board, he has always done it "his" way. With great love and respect, I would like to induct my friend Bob Mielke into UMECRA's Hall of Fame.

 Last Saturday, June25th, Mr. Bob Mielke was inducted into another great Hall. If St. Peter has any sense of humor, I am sure he was waiting for Bob with a Martini in hand. The sound track from Magnificent Seven was blasting away, and Bob's great horse, Smoke, was there to greet him. I am proud to have known Bob, and will remember his stories and acts of kindness all my life.
Thanks for the drinks – both alcoholic and otherwise – and "luv ya, hon."