

Ruth Stewart

One of the most memorable quotes I have heard about Ms. Stewart was: “We decided we needed to reroute the ride because the creek water was over Ruth’s head”. This was from Linda and Aaron Mower regarding a torrential rainstorm that hit one year at their Dead Dog Creek Ride. The best thing about this was that no one asked “who is that?” Ruth has been a legend and mentor to so many of us, majority being in the Illinois region but I’m sure over the past 40 years of UMECRA, everyone has either competed in a ride she has managed or acted as a governing steward, competed against her or her daughters, or seen her crewing for the many juniors and adults she has encouraged to join this sport and become lifelong members. Who is the lady that will be up several hours before sunrise and not go to sleep until the final person in camp is tucked away, while still having that great smile on her face at all times? Ruth. Who knows the rulebooks of UMECRA, AERC, and AHA like the back of her hand? Ruth. Who has been one of Illinois’ longest acting 4H leaders and ambassador of the Arabian horse? Ruth. Ruth has several competition miles on the horse, but those don’t begin to compare to the number of miles she has as a manager, crew, steward and volunteer. Ruth has worn the hat as a showwoman within the Arabian Horse World, trainer, manager, rider, pit crew, volunteer, mother, and mentor—many times doing several of those all at one time.

– Dr. Olivia Rudolphi

Ruth’s daughters came for the surprise at convention, here’s what they said,

Mom, thank you for teaching us that we can do anything, be afraid of nothing, and to enjoy everything. Thank you for teaching us to look after everyone around us, including the animal kingdom and all life. Thank you for being the best Mom any girl could have, and three of us have this privilege! - Tiffani, Haley and Nikki

Here is a summary of the numerous roles Ruth Stewart has played outside of UMECRA; not only with her family, but also in the community and in the equine world.

For 46 years that Mom's been a 4-H leader, always of course specializing in the Horse and Pony projects and taking her 4-H'ers to endless shows, judging contests, Horse Bowl and Hippology competitions at regional, state, and sometimes national level. Ruth's three girls each spent nine years under their Mom's guidance in 4-H, and the opportunities to develop as future leaders were endlessly granted, thanks to Ruth's encouragement and dedication. Demonstrating their projects at Ruth has given endlessly of her time to her children, grandchildren, and four generations of young people coming through 4-H and Arab Inc and locally, helping them develop a lifelong relationship with the horse, including the sport of long-distance riding. Another of Ruth’s accomplishments was getting the Martinsville Agricultural Fair Arena and announcers stand rebuilt.