

In Loving Memory of Brock Haywood

February 22, 1980 – July 31, 2002

When he was three or four years old, he got tired of waiting for Mom. He hauled Princess, a family horse, over to the fence and climbed on. Holding her mane, he rode her to the middle of a herd of eight or nine horses. When Mom spotted him, she eased into the pasture, heart racing, to rescue her little cowboy. She explained the danger, and said, “You never to that again.” Undaunted, he looked her right in the eye and said, “I’m gonna be a horse trainer.” He was right.

Brock Haywood never met a stranger. He loved life, horses, and people. With horses never far from his side, he started showing in 4-H Pleasure and Rodeo at age nine. Brock got his first reining horse, Honey boc Sybil, at age 14. Brock’s mom, Carrie Haywood of Goodrich, credits Matt Lantz for giving Brock his start in reining.

Brock rode on the Goodrich High School Equestrian team, and he represented Michigan at the Quarter Horse Congress in 1997 and 1998, where he won many awards. He continued his program with Ed Fear, a national reining trainer from Illinois. Brock completed his apprenticeship program with Ed in 2001, and returned to Michigan as a young professional trainer.

That year, Brock showed some young horses he’d trained, but he had another passion. He insisted on taking his Mom, who had quit showing years before, out on the Quarter Horse Circuit. With his guidance, she won five titles that year. Brock considered it a small gift to his Mom for all those years of support. He recognized the tremendous gift she was to him. Even so, Carrie says “I’d always felt I was on the outside looking in. I felt like I never really belonged.” Brock found that amusing. “You were never on the outside,” Brock told her. Carrie says that eventually, through Brock, she finally felt like she was a part of it.

The following year, 2002, Brock started showing in the NRHA Limited Open. He took clients, and started to win. Brock had a gift rarely seen – one that couldn’t be taught. Grateful for those who helped him get started, he also liked helping youth in their reining success. Brock missed his first reining show in July because of a headache. Two days later, his Mom

found him passed out on his bed, where he'd been looking at pictures from his shows. Brock never woke up. He passed away two days later, on July 31, from an aneurysm. Brock was only 22.

There are still no words to describe this tragedy. It's unthinkable. Brock was a gift to everyone, plain and simple.

When Brock's trainer, Ed Fear, heard of his passing, he was devastated. He said, "I'd give anything to be with Brock." Three days after Brock died, Ed suffered a heart attack at a horse show and died. Grateful for everything he did for her son; Carrie Haywood felt a tiny spark of comfort knowing that Brock wasn't alone.

In 2004, in loving memory of Brock Haywood, a \$500 Youth Sportsmanship Year-End Award was established through the Michigan Reining Horse Association.

Whenever you see a child on a horse, think of Brock. And if that child mounts a horse on his own and holds only the mane, get him down safely, then hold, nurture, and encourage him to follow his passion. Brock would want that.

The tremendous gift of Brock Haywood is neither gone nor forgotten!

