



MIDGE AMES

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A career cut short

*Kidney failure forces champion cutting mare
Docs Painted Doll from the show ring*

by GALA NETTLES

With \$17,566.42 accumulated winnings during the first five months of 1993, Docs Painted Doll led the National Cutting Horse Association's Top 10 Open standings. The little Paint mare that stands barely 14-1 hands also threatened to be a contender for the 1993 NCHA World Championship.

The run for the championship abruptly ended, however, when Docs Painted Doll suffered kidney failure. No longer in contention for the NCHA's coveted World Champion title, the sorrel tobiano mare is currently struggling to regain her strength. It is considered a miracle that she is alive.



Fort Worth, Texas, trainer Chubby Turner did not begin the 1993 NCHA show season with the intention of campaigning Docs Painted Doll for a year-end award. Instead, he planned only to haul the mare, owned by his wife, Ginger, to enough shows to complete the \$30,000 requirement for an NCHA Silver Award.

"During the early months of the year, she never made more than two runs without getting a check," said Chubby of "Doll's" 1993 performances. "She placed at all the major stock shows we went to, winning San Antonio, splitting third in Houston, taking third in San Angelo and second in Fort Worth."

After several months, however, Docs Painted Doll began showing symptoms that all was not well.

"In April, she didn't act like she felt good," Chubby said. "The vets thought she might be having a little

colic, or maybe her ovaries were bothering her. She wasn't really sick, but she just wouldn't get better."

Chubby knew something was wrong with Doll because she had acted the same way in 1989 when she tied up during the season. That year, both he and Ginger showed Doll to several wins and placings in Pacific Coast Cutting Horse Association Open and Non-Pro classes.

In 1990, Ginger showed Doll in APHA competition, earning 49 Open and 19 Amateur cutting points. The pair also won APHA World Championships in Open Senior cutting and Amateur cutting.

Although she performed well that year, the Turners still felt that something was not right with Doll. They stayed off of the mare during 1991 and part of the 1992 show season.

In the fall of 1992, Chubby again entered Doll in NCHA competition, earning \$3,716.88 in five outings. During those whirlwind shows, the little mare seemed to be back to her normal self. This encouraged Chubby to haul Doll for her NCHA Silver Award in 1993.

However, on June 29 of this year, Doll's show career, and almost her life, were brought to an abrupt halt.

"It was about 7:30 in the morning and we were getting ready for the Abilene Summer Circuit," said Chubby. "I worked Doll on three fresh cows and she did really well. But when I stepped off her, she acted like she was tying up. I put her in the barn with a couple of fans on her and gave her some pain killers. As I was leading another horse out, Doll went down."

Instead of colic, Docs Painted Doll suffered kidney failure. Fortunately, Dr. William Buck Neil Jr., a Benbrook, Texas, veterinarian experienced with kidney failure in livestock, was able to save Doll's life.

"Dr. Neil stayed with us for two weeks," said Chubby. "He kept an I.V. in Doll that had to be moved around. As a result, one place in her neck became infected. This caused sores to come up in Doll's mouth, and she wouldn't eat.

"But Dr. Neil never gave up. He told us we were going to have to pray for a miracle because if we didn't get one, we were going to lose her. He never stopped believing he could kick-start her kidneys, and finally it worked. If it hadn't been for Dr. Neil, Doll wouldn't have made it. It just wasn't supposed to happen."

But that wasn't the first miracle for Docs Painted Doll. The little mare was born a twin, and her birth, as well as her life, are proof that miracles still happen.

Docs Painted Doll, sired by Doc Doll and out of Sugar Smoke, a cropout daughter of Sugar Flash AQHA by Sugar Bars, arrived around midnight in the spring of 1983.

Docs Painted Doll, sired by Doc Doll and out of Sugar Smoke by Sugar Flash AQHA, has NCHA earnings of \$54,384.87 and is the 1990 APHA World Champion in Open Senior Cutting. She is shown with owner Ginger Turner of Fort Worth, Texas, in the saddle.





“We didn’t know Sugar Smoke was carrying twins,” said Marquelon Ingram, daughter of Martin and Jacquelon Ingram, breeders of Docs Painted Doll. “Dad checked on her about midnight and she was foaling. She had Doll first, and when Sugar Smoke wouldn’t get up after foaling, they were going to call the vet. But then she started having the other colt. It was quite a surprise.”

Docs Doll was the larger of the twin foals. Her brother’s registered name is Extra Doc.

Because of her size and slow growth, Doll was not started in training until she was 3 years old. However, she showed her desire to work cattle at an early age.

“One day, when Doll was just a young colt, we were moving cattle from one end of the arena to the other,” Marquelon recalled. “Doll was running loose in the arena with the cattle and instead of running away from them she immediately started playing with them. She would get a cow away from the herd and then run it up and down the fence.

“She stayed that interested in cattle. From the first day she was put on cows, she almost trained herself.”

Since Docs Painted Doll was so small and started under saddle so late, the Ingrams had difficulty finding a trainer interested in seeing what the mare could do in the cutting pen. So it was Marquelon who became responsible for the majority of Doll’s cattle training.

“Because she was so little and I was not big, we just fit,” said Marquelon, a Mesquite, Texas, exhibitor who earned 36 APHA Amateur cutting points and won the 1987 APHA Amateur Cutting National Championship with Doll.

Top: Docs Painted Doll (far right) was the first and larger of the twins Sugar Smoke produced in 1983.

Bottom: Marquelon Ingram, of Mesquite, Texas, rode Docs Painted Doll to the 1987 APHA National Championship in Amateur cutting. Ingram’s parents were the breeders of the mare.

In 1988, Marquelon married, leaving cutting behind. She sold Docs Painted Doll to Tom Ulmer, manager for Robert Wagner Ranches. Ulmer, in turn, gave Doll to Ginger Turner as a gift.

Even with her late start in training and sporadic show career, Docs Painted Doll has accumulated NCHA lifetime earnings of \$54,384.87. Since it is doubtful she will show again, the Turners are hoping that Doll, who most likely was born with a kidney defect, may be able to carry a foal, or perhaps have an embryo transplant.

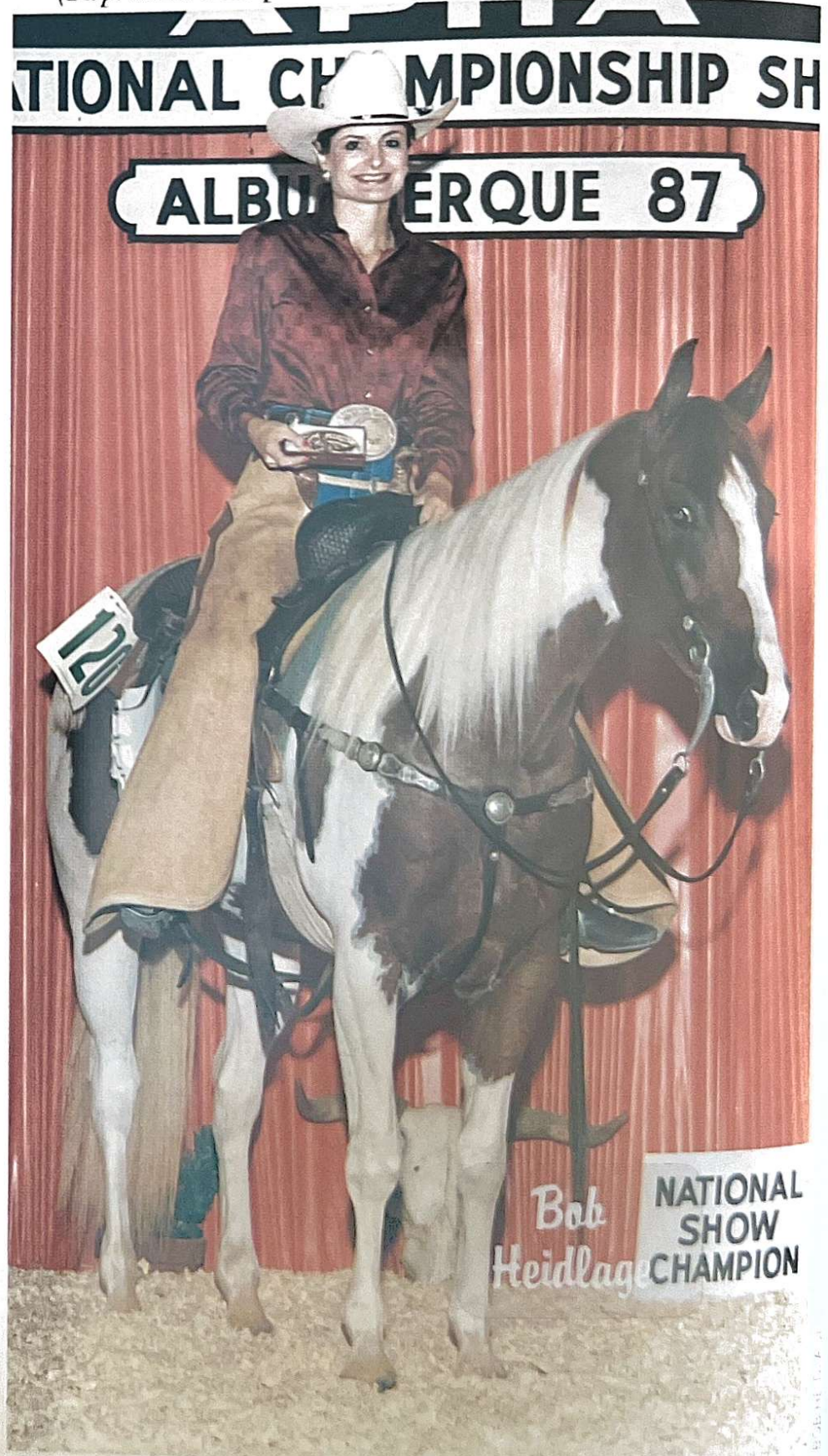
Currently, however, Doll is recuperating. And although her weight loss reflects the trauma she has undergone, Doll’s personality has remained unchanged.

“If she sees Ginger, she starts nickering and coming towards her,” said Chubby.

“Doll still thinks she’s a person. She likes to be scratched, and she’ll pout if you put her where she doesn’t think she ought to be.

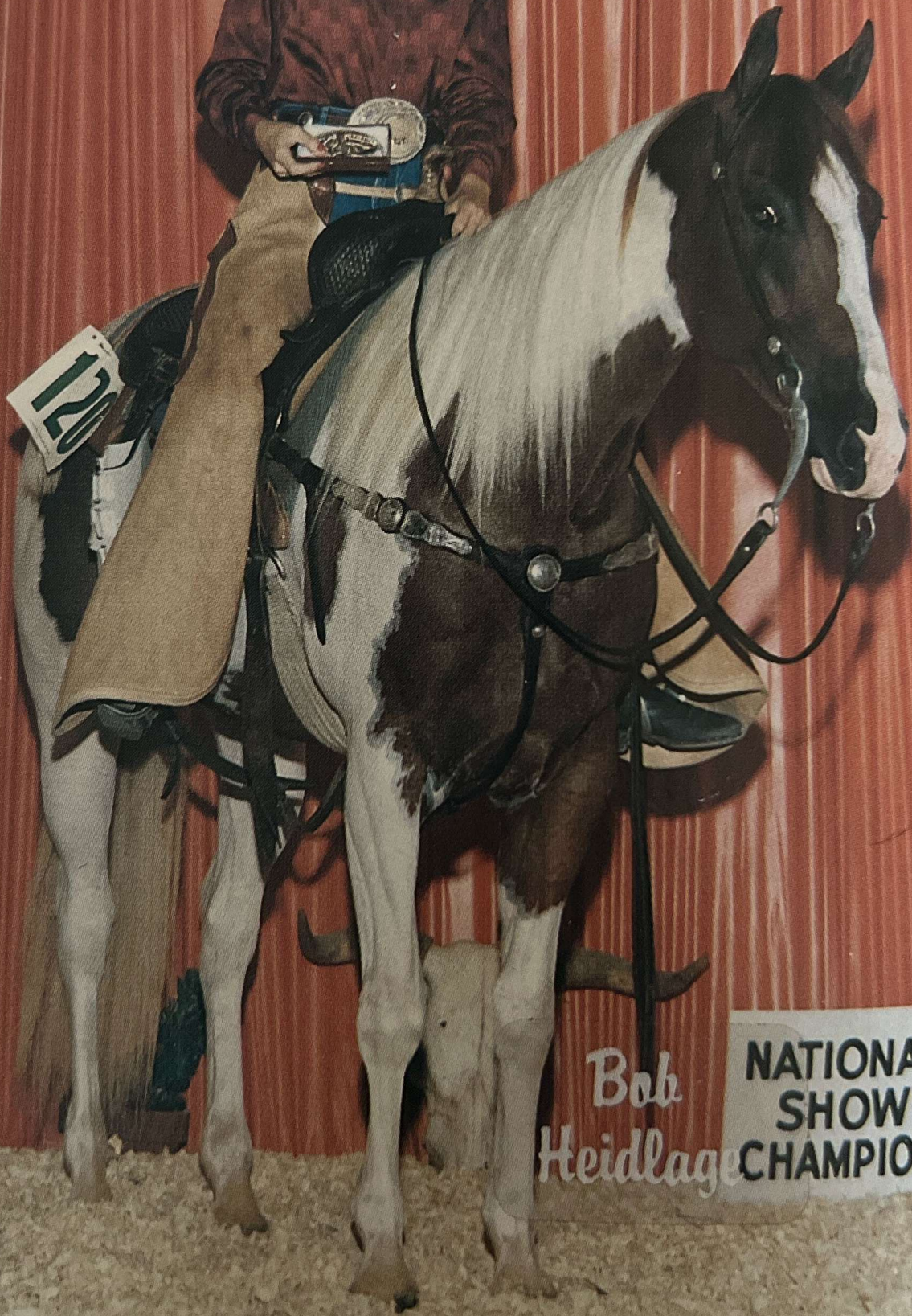
“I hope I get to ride another horse like her some day because she’s probably got the biggest heart of any horse I’ve ever ridden.”

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