

## Hall of Fame Inductees

by Archie McDonald

Visit [www.bchorseracinghalloffame.org](http://www.bchorseracinghalloffame.org) for more British Columbia Racing Hall of Fame

# Frank Barroby

*"I should have been leading rider in Canada that year(1965)," he recalls. "But statistics weren't available then like they are now. So I went hunting for a couple of weeks, before going to Toronto and I ended up losing to Hugo Dittfach by about five winners."*



DRF correspondent and British Columbia Racing Hall of Fame director Randy Goulding presents Frank Barroby, accompanied by wife Lynne, with the well-deserved honour.

To understand how Frank Barroby became the only person to be both leading rider and leading trainer at Hastings Park it is advisable to go back to the family ranch in Ravenscrag, Sask., a dot on the map just big enough to accommodate a post office and three grain elevators.

Frank was literally raised on horseback and he's been on a real live merry-go-round for 66 years.

Quite a family, the Barrobys. Grandfather Frank had come from England, claimed three sections of homestead land, and became justice of the peace in Ravenscrag. Father Ryott was the first baby born in nearby Eastend, but he would not be the last. And certainly not the last Barroby.

Frank was one of 12 children which is a full starting gate at any racetrack. They were seven girls and five boys. Frank was number four and brother Harold, many times a leading trainer who preceded him into the Hall of Fame in 2001, was number five.

Brother Larry, who trained here for several

years and married jockey Pat Owen and now manages a farm on Vancouver Island, was number nine on the assembly line.

Given the family circumstances, Frank didn't choose a life at the racetrack as much as the life chose him.

He attended a two-room, one-teacher school in Ravenscrag before moving to high school in Eastend, which was a 60 mile round trip. The Barrobys were the first to get on the bus in the morning and the last off at night. They missed many days when the snow was high and the temperature low.

There were about 30 horses on the farm, most of them 'pasture-bred' and it was the boys' job to break them when the time came.

Frank had not attended enough school days during grade nine to be promoted and it was natural that he graduated to the race track. At 15 he started galloping horses for trainer Mike Cojocar in Lethbridge, Alta. Later he moved to Bud Greenwood's barn, but his most influential mentor was veteran jockey Gerry Rasmussen.

He broke his maiden at Winnipeg's Assiniboia Downs in 1961 and then rode the Prairie circuit -- Edmonton, Calgary, Regina Lethbridge, Saskatoon -- before moving to Ontario and finally to Vancouver in 1968 where he rode for nine years.

He was 107 pounds as an apprentice, stretched thinly over a 5'4" frame. "I had a set routine for keeping my weight down," he says. "Coffee in the morning, toasted bacon and tomato sandwich every day for lunch. I jogged in sweat clothes. I hated the sweat box but I would drive in the car with the heater on and the windows up. It was tough, but I was always strong and in control of horses."

With his born-in-the-saddle knack for getting the most out of his mounts he was always at or near the top of the jockey standings

The year after he lost the bug he won 78 races in 42 days at Assiniboia. He won a grand total of 83 races in 1962, followed by years of 116, 125, and 182 winners in 1965.

"I should have been leading rider in Canada

that year(1965),” he recalls. “But statistics weren’t available then like they are now. So I went hunting for a couple of weeks, before going to Toronto and I ended up losing to Hugo Dittfach by about five winners.”

He was riding for some of the biggest and best stables in Ontario, but he says, “Toronto is not Ravenscrag. “

As the saying goes, “You can take the boy out of the farm but you can’t take the farm out of the boy,” and Frank found himself going home for the branding season and staying an extra week.

Vancouver was a better fit for a small town boy. When agent Doug Winship suggested he come West in 1968 Frank was quick to pack his tack. He was paid a retainer to ride for trainer Lionel Heinrich and owners Peter Wall and Peter Redekop, who were just dipping their feet in racing’s tricky waters.

Frank was leading rider in his inaugural season at Hastings with 91 victories, 18 more than Basil Frazier. The following season he was runner-up to Frazier, who set a season record of 123 wins.

Although weight was an increasing problem he rode with the best until the end of the 1976 season when he finally conceded the battle with the scales.

“I loved riding so much and I hated to quit,” he recalls. “I thought that if I couldn’t ride I didn’t want to be around the track. We thought we might buy dad’s place (in Ravenscrag) and run some cattle, but when we figured it out on paper it didn’t work.

“Then the late Bob Hall of Kamloops offered me a retainer and a percentage of the purses if I trained for him. So I said I would give it a try and darned if I didn’t really like it.”

He had his share of outstanding runners for Hall, but had his greatest success training for Peter Redekop, one of the men he came out to ride for in 1968.

His most successful runner was Redekop’s Astro Beauty who won 14 races out of 22 starts in the early ‘90s and was named B.C.’s Horse of the Year in 1993. A sampling of his other stakes winners for a variety of owners reads: Sheza Shiningstar, Arctic Shadows, Lady’s Excuse, Air Flight, Pirate’s Quill, Bacus and Insectutor

In all he won 49 stakes races at Hastings and has had 891 wins overall, 959 seconds, and 949 thirds. He topped the trainer standings in 1986, 1990 and 1993.

Along the way, 1965 to be exact, Frank married Lynn McCann, the daughter of trainer Jack McCann, whose brother, Pete, gained fame as the trainer for E.P. Taylor, Canada’s most influential racing figure.

Frank and Lynn have two children: Darcy, the outrider who leads the post parade at Hastings and daughter Jodie, a lab technician

Says Barroby: “I certainly never regretted coming to Vancouver. There were so many days of racing in one place and the kids could go to the same school.”

The Barroby family has come a long ways from Ravenscrag.



# THOROUGHBRED LADIES CLUB OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

**Presidential Committee**

Linda Sentes, Eleanor Vanden Born, Diane Cardnial

**Treasurer**

Barb Williams

**Health & Welfare**

Marion Ryan, Anna Byrne, Marilyn Combs

**Membership**

Barbara Ganger

**Social Conveners**

Louise Massey

for information contact: **604~420~0869**

In recognition of many contributions to Thoroughbred Racing in British Columbia, the Thoroughbred Ladies Club offers higher education rewards to the members and to the sons, daughters, grandchildren and legal wards of members, who derive (eligible personnel) or have derived their principle incomes as backstretch personnel of Thoroughbred Racing in British Columbia.