

A Hero in Our Midst ~Jesslyn Besardi~

By: Hannah Ruth Pettyjohn

A career that just made sense

"I knew I had to be in the medical field somehow, I just didn't know how." A thought that would lead Jesslyn Besardi to find the career she would come to know and love.

Being in the medical field, came naturally to Besardi- it's a family business. Her grandmother was a nurse, who with the help of Besardis' mother, Nancy, operated their own long-term care facility. It was only natural for Besardi to follow suit.

Saving lives is what drives her. For Besardi, it is an honor to be on the front lines of some of the scariest times for those who walk into her ICU. Working as a Neuro Trauma Nurse, Besardi knows that when patients come in she is their last resort.

Her patients aren't the only thing that is special to Besardi, however. She has found a family in those that she works with.

"I worked for the University of Massachusetts for most of my career up until 2015. I laughed because the girls there, they were my family, and I always said I was never leaving there; I was dying there. You know, we were each other's Healthcare advocates," she said. "To this day I still talk to them and I have friends that come here to visit."

Growing up around horses

The equine industry didn't come as naturally to Besardi. She was raised in the city, but her parents cultivated an interest in horses for her. Her family would quickly find out that this was not just a simple faze in her life. At the age of eight, she got her first pony.

Besardi said, "For the most part in New England, it was more the open circuits and we did the hunter jumpers growing up."

Since the equine industry was new to Besardi she knew she

would need some help. She remembers and still thinks fondly of those who were a part of her success, such as her first riding instructor, Cindy Pope, now Anderson. She said it's important for not only trainers to value their students but for students to also value them in return.

Growing up having horses allowed her to work hard for something. She is thankful that her parents didn't do all of her work for her but rather pushed her to work for the goals that she had set before herself. She said both of her parents are extremely hard-working, and passed that value onto her. A value that would propel her forward in life.

At the age of 14, her parents bought her a versatile horse that could be used for both jumping and eventing. It wasn't until her early 20s that she shifted her focus to stock breeds. Ultimately, pairing that with the continuation of jumping.

Besardi said, "I was still jumping so I was in search of a really good jumping horse and Karen Dodge from New Hampshire introduced me to Robbisox (Robbi), who was my first Appaloosa.

He was actually one of the first geldings that the Appaloosa [Horse Club] inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2004." 2004 was special to her for more than just Robbisox being inducted into the Hall of Fame, she also had an incredible run with her horse I'm Way Too Cool.

She purchased I'm Way To Cool from Karen Dodge and owned him from the moment that he hit the ground. Besardi would go on to show him in about 15 shows in the year 2004. She remembers some of those shows going late into the night- a true mark of competition. The pair would go on to win a Year-End



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High Point Award; a feat that would be memorable for years to come. That buckle has been on display in her home for the last 19 years.

A New Era in the Industry

[Her success with] I'm Way Too Cool would be the catalyst that led Besardi to start breeding. Besardi was in her 30s at this point and decided to buy a broodmare named Love Me- a daughter of I Love Willy. Besardi has foaled three babies with Love Me. Love Me Too The Max competes in Hunter Jumpers and Dressage in Pennsylvania, Love My Assets, and Showin All My Assets both hold World and National titles.

"I had the chance to move here to Texas in 2015. When I had someone approach me to buy my home back in Connecticut, I took it and ran... right to Pilot Point. So, I convinced my family that we should invest in a bigger piece of property here and they followed my lead," Besardi said. "It's been huge for us. For myself, I should say. It's allowed me to grow, grow my dreams, my aspirations... I dreamed about living here and doing this since I was a child. I had friends that lived here and showed Paint horses and I was able to come here in the 90s and visit and I knew this is where I wanted to be. Then, buying this place really kind of launched us. I mean we're still really small breeders, but we try to do quality over quantity."

After moving to Texas, Besardi went on to take a chance with another mare, Totally By Faith. "I bought her because she was big and pretty and had color... I took a gamble on that mare and she's a phenomenal producer. Her son, Hubbout A Kiss,

just won the Open Three-Year-Old Hunter Under Saddle at the Appaloosa Nationals & was Reserve in the color Three-Year-Old Hunter Under Saddle at the Premier in Kentucky." Totally By Faith has produced two World, National, and NSBA World Champions, and she is in foal for 2024 to Enticed. Besardi's gamble paid off.

"We are scaling down. I say that tongue in cheek because we are moving up [to Gainesville], my fiancé, Sean O'Neil, and I, with 15 of our own [horses]," Besardi said. "We decided if we were going to breed more that we were going to try to own our recips and it was challenging to learn all of that process this year." Clarifying, "We had a pretty good success rate over the last couple years. So, our plan for the new place, it's more personalized for us. It'll be more breeding and for our own personal horses."

Wapuzzan

2002 Stallion
Sire: Wap Spotted
by Wap Spot 2
Dam: Justgotme Puzzled

True black with snow cap blanket.
Homozygous Lp (color producer
even on solid mares)

Sport and performance stallion

Standing at
Sunset Ranch Appaloosas
Joy & Kevin Carr
Platteville, WI 53181
(608) 732-6855 cell
(608) 348-6855 home
sunset-ranch-appys@hotmail.com



**Sunset
Ranch
Appaloosas**
www.Wapuzzan.com

Stud fee: \$700
Booking fee: \$125
Shipped Semen

The Effect of Texas on Her Career

While moving to Pilot Point was a dream for Besardi in the equine industry, she remembers it being scary occupationally. She had to leave her nursing family at the University of Massachusetts. Something that is pivotal in her career.

Since being in Texas Besardi has found trust in her new colleagues. 2020 was a time of tribulation for us all. Being unsure of our safety in a pandemic. Besardi was at the front lines of this, shifting her focus to working in the COVID-19 sector of the hospital. She fondly remembers the security she had in showing up every day. Not fearing the possibility of getting sick amidst the pandemic.

Now, Besardi has shifted her focus back to Neuro Trauma ICU and sums up most days as controlled chaos. There are days that she runs from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. non-stop. She said, "We are the only trauma hospital in Denton County and the last one between Denton and OKC. We treat patients from many rural areas of Southern Oklahoma as well as Denton County. As Trauma Nurses we have patients come in unidentified and not only treat the patient but have to FIND and emotionally support their families through out their hospital stay."

After long days she described the equine industry as the outlet that allows her to relax and destress. "I can have the most horrible, stressful exhausting day at work and I go home and walk through the barn and hear my horses chewing hay or I walk out to see the babies in the pasture and instantly I am at PEACE," Besardi said. "The Medical part of my life makes me thankful and appreciative to have the horse industry in my life."



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After almost eight years in Pilot Point, she is looking forward to her next adventure. Besardi will be moving to Gainesville where she will continue on as a breeder and a Neuro Trauma ICU Nurse. We are excited to see where this journey takes Besardi and the impact that she will have in Gainesville. We thank her for the impact that she has had on the Appaloosa Horse Club and the many patients she has seen over the years.



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