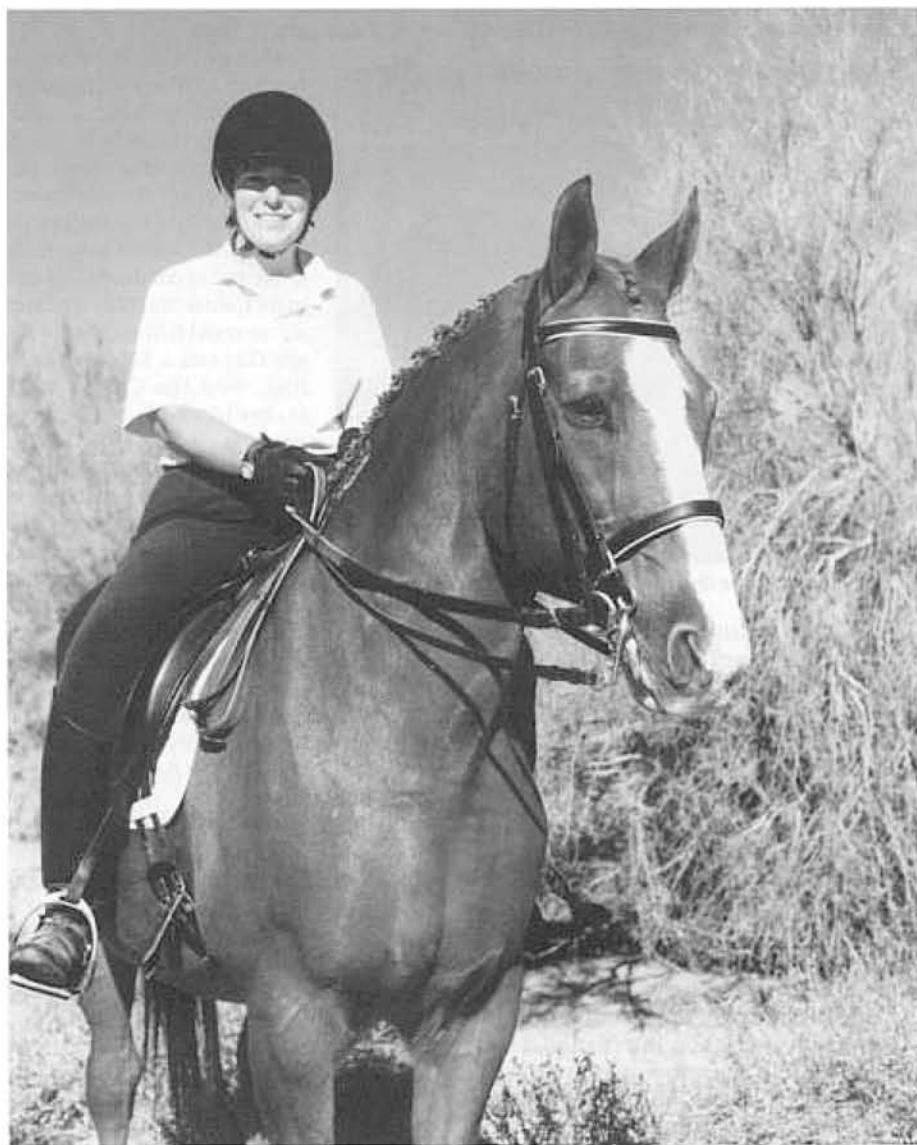




Statesman: Secretariat's oldest living son still thrives in Arizona



Statesman, at 26, with author Tobi Taylor up

BY TOBI TAYLOR

A great deal of excitement and anxiety surrounded Secretariat's retirement from racing in November of 1973, after he had swept the Triple Crown and won 13 other races. Earlier that year, he had been syndicated into 32 shares for a record \$6.1 million, and much attention was being paid to his ability to sire offspring by shareholders eager to begin to recoup their investment. (Some of them no doubt recalled that Assault, the 1946 Triple Crown winner, had been practically sterile.)

To ascertain his fertility, in December of 1973 Secretariat was bred to three test mares. None of them were Thoroughbreds, so that, as Thomas Kiernan, author of *The Secretariat Factor*, put it, "the resultant foals, if any, being half-breeds, would have no value other than as curios." Clearly, Kiernan grossly underestimated the public's interest in the Triple Crown winner's test

SUZAN DANIEL LEASH

offspring. For weeks, *The Thoroughbred Record* carried updates on the viability of Secretariat's—and his stablemate Riva Ridge's—sperm, and Arnold Kirkpatrick, in the Jan. 12, 1974, issue, wrote, "there was an almost visible air of relief at Claiborne Farm last week when, on Jan. 3, the first test mare bred to Secretariat was reported in foal on her 40-day examination."

Ultimately, Secretariat was able to get two of the three mares in foal, and in late 1974 two colts were born. The first one, out of an Appaloosa mare named Leola, was a striking chestnut with a white blanket who matured to 17 hands. While in foal, his dam had been sold for upward of \$25,000, and once the colt—named First Secretary—arrived, his new owner sold 15 lifetime breeding shares to him at \$2,500 apiece.

In most families, the first-born child receives the lion's share of attention, and First Secretary was no exception. The date of his birth, Nov. 15, 1974, was recorded for posterity. Periodicals such as the *Appaloosa Journal* and the now-defunct *Classic Magazine* devoted entire articles to him, and he was mentioned in passing, if not by name, in many more. Over the



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Statesman is the product of a test mating between Secretariat and a draft mare

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years, First Secretary gained fame as a sire of Appaloosa racehorses and sport horses, like First Hot Tip, Watch Me Go First, Fast Talking Man, First Time, and Belle's Pizazz. He was also elected to the Appaloosa Hall of Fame. First Secretary died at age 19, just as his sire had, in 1993.

Secretariat's second son was born with comparatively little fanfare: his exact date of birth is unknown, though he was born sometime in November or December of 1974. His dam, whose name went unrecorded, was a nondescript draft mare that was used to nurse Claiborne Farm foals.

Don Montgomery, a lawyer and insurance executive from Lima, Ohio, first saw the colt at nine months of age and decided he had to have him. Christened Statesman, the colt grew to be a strapping individual, measuring 15.3 hands. Although three inches shorter than his sire, he was powerfully built, with straight legs, good feet, a well-set-on neck, a short back, and heavily muscled hindquarters. Aside from sporting a blaze rather than a star and strip, Statesman's color and markings—a solid-colored left foreleg, with socks or stockings on the remaining three—matched those of his sire.

Not only did Statesman look like Secretariat, he inherited his athletic ability. In a 1980 Chicago *Tribune* article, Don Mont-

gomery remarked that "I brought him home (from Claiborne) and he promptly jumped a four-foot paddock fence clean. I figured we had a pretty good jumper on our hands." Montgomery's trainer, Julie Otte (now Julian), preferred riding on the flat to jumping, so Statesman was instead trained and shown in dressage to fourth level. At that time, there were few horses in this country schooled to such a high standard.

Montgomery's plan was to breed Statesman to Thoroughbred mares to create a horse ideally suited for dressage, show jumping, and combined training (a test of supreme fitness that comprises three phases, over three days: dressage, cross-country, and show jumping). With great foresight, in 1981, he and his then wife, Jennifer Montgomery, started an organization called the American Performance Horse Association, and Statesman (Registry No. 000000001) was its foundation sire. Today, there are several breed associations, such as the Performance Horse Registry and the American Warmblood Society, that encourage the use of Thoroughbreds and part-Thoroughbreds as sport horses, but in the late 1970s, part-bred sport horses were comparatively rare in the United States, and those that were here had been imported from Europe.

As Montgomery predicted, not only did Statesman excel as a dressage horse, he

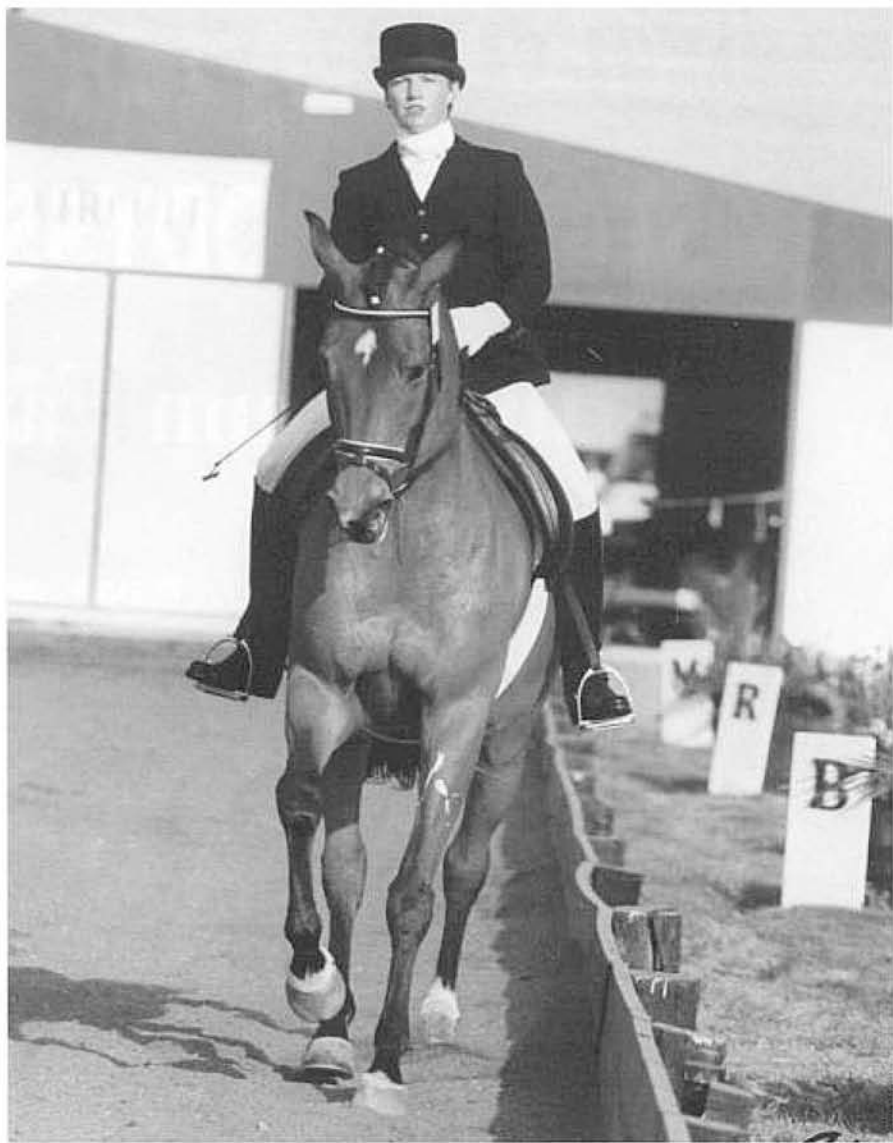
also turned out to be a capable sire of sport horses. Bred mainly to Thoroughbred mares, he produced offspring that were considerably larger, smoother bodied, and even more talented than he was. In addition, they inherited his work ethic, charisma, and unflappable disposition.

Among his best-known offspring are Chief of State, later renamed Caveat, who competed at the highest level of dressage, grand prix; Courier, who competed to fourth level in dressage and now serves as a school horse; State Trooper, who still competes at second level; and Something Stately, who competed to second level. Statesman's other offspring, including Director, Dixie State, Envoy, Evita, and Manana, excelled as polo ponies, hunters, and jumpers.

A VARIED CAREER

Despite the quality of his offspring, interest in Statesman as a sire waned as he grew older, and he was gelded when he was 10 years old. After that, this versatile horse was trained and used as a polo pony and also schooled over jumps, for which he had shown such aptitude years before.

In 1989, Statesman, along with other American Performance Horses, was shipped to Scottsdale, Ariz., to be sold. Statesman caught the eye of Shelley Ebel, owner of Flying Fox Farm in Scottsdale, who had recently sold her riding horse and was looking for a replacement mount. She found herself immediately drawn to the 15-year-old horse, and she asked her dressage trainer, Julie Sodowsky, of Phoenix, to ride and evaluate him. Ebel recalls that Sodowsky particularly praised his trot, and she remembers that "he had big, ex-



Courier, a son of Statesman's, competed to fourth level in dressage and now serves as a school horse

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pressive (flying lead) changes—the way they're supposed to be. (When you rode him) you'd just get catapulted." After a few months in training, Sodowsky showed Statesman in three third level dressage classes, of which he won two. He then started to develop a lameness problem, which curtailed his training.

Because Statesman's lameness rendered him useful for only light work, he entered the final phase of his varied career—as a dressage "schoolmaster," meaning that it was time for this four-legged professor to teach riders who knew considerably less about dressage than he did. It was then, while I served as a working student at Flying Fox Farm, that I met Statesman, or "Twinkie," as he is affectionately known.

In 1997, former Swedish equestrian

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team member Christina Hermodsson was holding a dressage clinic at Flying Fox Farm. One of the participants in the clinic had canceled, and I was asked to fill the slot by riding Statesman, whom I had never met. When I went to get him out of his stall, it was hard for me to believe that he was one of the famous Secretariat test foals. He was 23 years old, and smaller and rounder than his sire. With his shaggy fetlocks (inherited, no doubt, from

his dam) and in his long winter coat, he looked more like a Thelwell pony than the son of a Triple Crown winner. As I tacked him up, he didn't initially endear himself to me because he quite stealthily tried to step on my foot while I was girthing him up and he considered biting me when I was bridling him. But once I mounted him, my perspective changed.

As we entered the dressage arena and headed toward Hermodsson, a gust of wind picked up a white plastic shopping bag, and I prepared for the worst as it

went flapping between Statesman's legs. Some horses would have been sent into a blind panic, but Statesman carried on his way as though the bag weren't there. We continued with our lesson, and by the end I was completely enthralled with him. To me, Statesman embodied the best of both of his parents. I had ridden warmbloods who never seemed to wake up, and Thoroughbreds who used any opportunity to go "off to the races," no matter how long they had been retired from the track. Statesman, on the other hand, was powerful but surprisingly light on his feet, quiet but not numb. I had the sense that Statesman simply couldn't be bothered by anything trivial. He knew he was someone special, and now I did, too.

THE PERSONIFICATION OF A DREAM

No one realized how privileged I felt to be riding Statesman. I had been a fan of Secretariat since my childhood, watching him streak across my television screen, saving newspaper clippings of his racing wins, and collecting posters, books, magazines, and prints featuring his likeness. I had been in Chicago the weekend Secretariat won the Arlington Invitational, and I had even made a pilgrimage to see him at Claiborne Farm, in 1975, but the farm was closed to visitors. As the years went by, I followed the exploits of his children, like Terlingua and General Assembly, and then his grandchildren, such as Chief's Crown and A.P. Indy. When Secretariat died in 1989, I grieved along with thousands of other racing fans. For me, Statesman was a living, breathing, chestnut link to an incredible era.

Knowing how much I enjoyed riding him, Ebel offered Statesman, then 24, to me in an extended lease agreement in 1988, and I took him to my home in the desert north of Scottsdale. Each day, I turn him out in a paddock with an Arabian mare one-third his age, whom we refer to as his "trophy wife." She helps keep him fit by chasing him when he gets out of line. He seems to think that is a small price to pay to be in her presence. When she comes back to the paddock after a ride, Statesman will try to impress her by doing a slow, cadenced trot, with his massive neck arched, and he will nicker deeply at her, a sound that is almost a growl. Unfortunately, this pageantry goes unnoticed except by me.

Even if he doesn't interest my mare, Statesman still has his share of admirers. Friends and relatives who don't consider themselves equine or horse racing enthusiasts have brought their own friends over to see him, saying, "Remember Secretariat? Well, this is his oldest living son!"

YOUNG GUNS TOP SONS

DEODAR

Woodman - Dhaka, by Icecapade

SW of \$162,200 DEODAR is by juvenile champion and leading sire WOODMAN, sire of 70 SWs and 9 champions, including classic winners HANSEL and TIMBER COUNTRY. DEODAR is out of SW DHAKA, a half-sister to SIEBE and PUZAR from the family of G1 SWs BOTH ENDS BURNING and HYPERBOREAN. Fee \$750 LF.

PEACE PRIZE

Polish Precedent - Sizes Vary, by Be My Guest

Group-placed allowance winner Peace Prize is by DANZIG's champion son and leading sire POLISH PRECEDENT, sire of BC Turf-G1 winner of \$4-million PILSUDSKI. Peace Prize is out of a half-sister to Leading Sire/Leading Broodmare Sire RIVERMAN. Fee \$1,000 LF.

RED RIVER GORGE

Gulch - Ballet de France, by Northern Dancer

Multiple allowance winner RED RIVER GORGE is by champion sprinter GULCH, sire of 38 SWs, including champion Leading Third Crop Sire THUNDER GULCH (\$2.9-million, Kentucky Derby-G1). RED RIVER GORGE is a half-brother to G1 champion MUHTARRAM and G3SW PROFIT COLUMN, out of G3 SW BALLETT DE FRANCE. First two runners include RED RIVER LADY, first or second in three of five starts including a win by 4½ lengths. Fee \$1,000 LF.

UNDENIABLE

Meadowlake - Coming Spring, by Graustark

A six-length winner, UNDENIABLE is by G1 juvenile SW MEADOWLAKE, sire of 38 SWs, including champion 2yo MEADOW STAR. UNDENIABLE is a half-brother to SW MAGICK TOP and G1-spw Ninety Years Young. His dam is a half-sister to Leading Sire/Leading Broodmare Sire ROBERTO. Fee \$1,000 LF.

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Indeed, several people have asked to have their picture taken with him, or even on him. He enjoys the attention and is easily posed for photos.

Statesman is ridden lightly several times a week, in a combination of ring work, dressage lessons, and trail riding. He is the best trail horse I've ridden because he is both unflappable and well trained. I know that most people think of dressage as an esoteric sport that cannot be applied to the "real world" of riding, but the original goal of dressage was to create a more athletic, responsive horse. Statesman is a pleasure on the trail because he can be ridden at the front or in the back of a group of horses, he can move around trees, bushes, or anything else on the landscape with a mere touch of my calf, and his speed can be easily rated.

Because we do so much trail riding, Statesman has become a sort of mascot to the children in my neighborhood. They misunderstood when I told them his name is Twinkie, so now we ride down the street to choruses of "Hi, Pinkie!" I also get calls from trail riding friends who want Statesman to set an example on the trail for their less experienced horses. The only time I've even come close to involuntar-

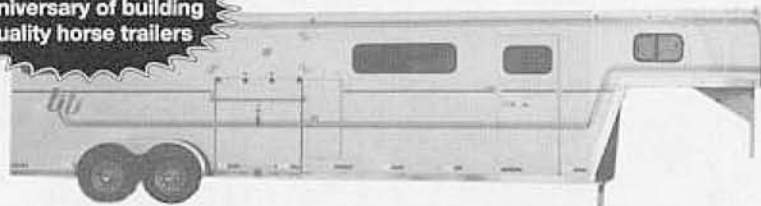


Statesman, who excelled as a dressage horse, later was trained as a polo pony and schooled over jumps

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ily leaving Statesman's back was when, during an outing, a motorcycle rider emerged out of nowhere, throwing up clouds of dust and gravel, and sending the other horse and rider in our party bolting down a desert arroyo. Statesman felt he had to follow suit, and off we charged, passing a coiled-up, hissing rattlesnake whose sleep we had disturbed. Within a few moments, all was under control again and we continued sedately through the desert. Even under those circumstances, I never had that horrible sense of being carted away by a crazed, brainless animal.

As a lesson horse, Statesman has been a master teacher. Over the course of a year, he taught me more about dressage than I had learned in the previous five. I would ride around with a book in hand, reading about what aids to give to execute a particular movement, and presto—he would do it. One day, my friend, neighbor, and trainer, Lois Whittington, remarked that Statesman knows how to piaffe, which is a trot on the spot that requires a tremendous amount of strength. While she explained how to ask him for it, she tapped his hind legs lightly for encouragement, and I suddenly felt an amazing sensation: with each stride, he was lifting me up, but we weren't moving for-

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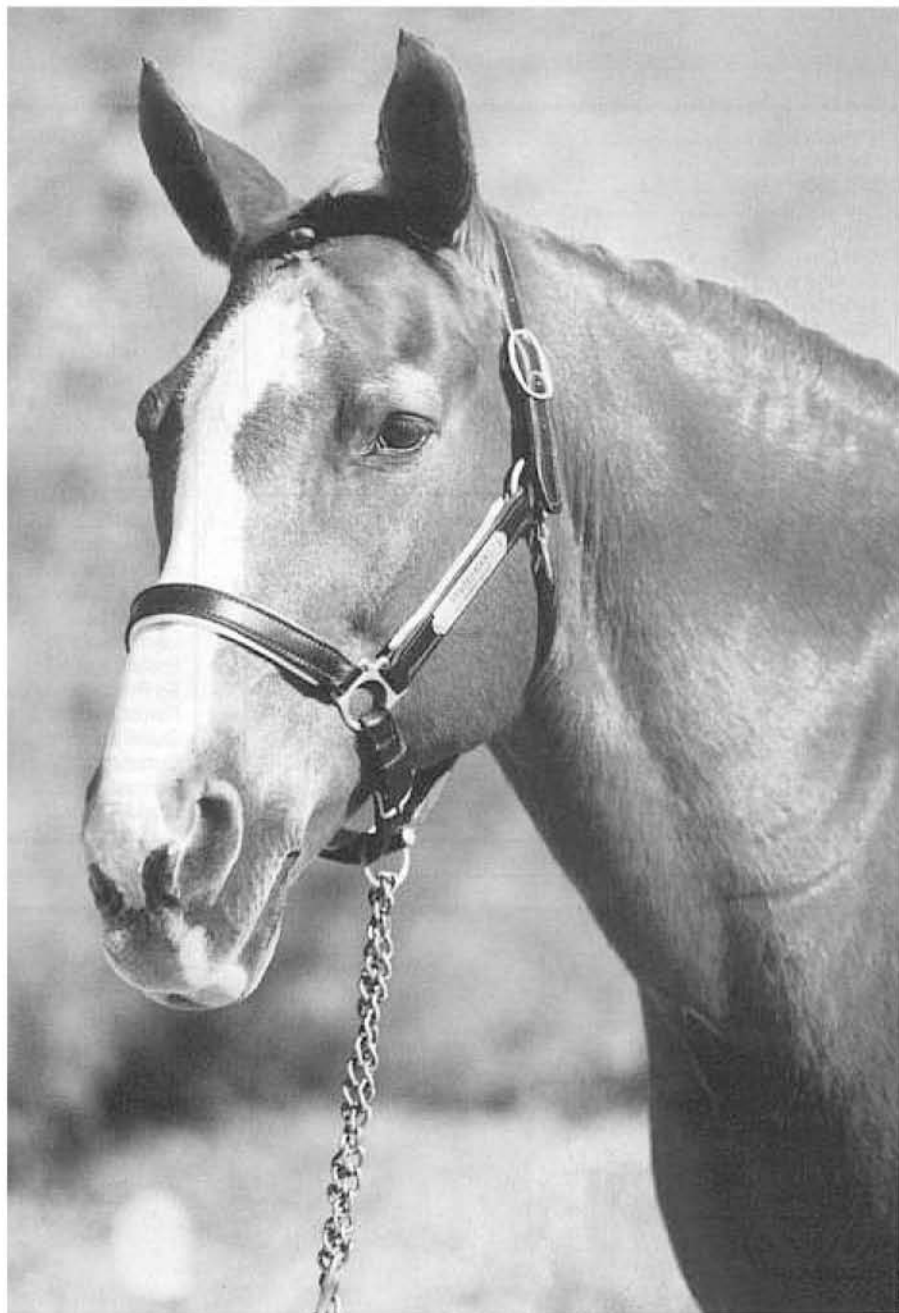
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ward. Never had I felt such power, and I am sure that his ability to piaffe is owed to his correct conformation and powerful hindquarters, which he no doubt inherited from his sire.

It has been said Secretariat did not come close to fulfilling breeders' expectations (though he more than made up for it by becoming a premier broodmare sire), and that he did not, by and large, tend to stamp his get with his own likeness. For example, what are considered his two best runners—Horse of the Year Lady's Secret and champion 3-year-old colt Risen Star, a small gray filly and a rangy bay colt, respectively—bore little or no resemblance to their sire. In contrast, it is interesting that both First Secretary and Statesman looked so much like Secretariat in terms of their conformation, color, and markings. The quality of these two "curios" goes beyond mere resemblance, however; each turned out to be a sire of merit, and Statesman has the added distinction of having excelled as a performance horse. As Jennifer Montgomery remarked, "Statesman is one of a kind. His progeny have all done well. He is a horse who could do anything."

Edward Bowen, former editor of *The Blood-Horse*, wrote that Secretariat was "the personification of a dream, dreamed by all men who would look upon greatness in a Thoroughbred and say, 'Ah, that he came along in our time.'" Those of us whose lives have been touched by Statesman—as riders, breeders, or owners of his descendants—know that what Bowen wrote about the father applies in great measure to the son. Ah, that both of them came along in our time! 🐾

Tobi Taylor is a freelance writer whose work has appeared in such publications as *Horse Illustrated*, *Dressage Today*, and *Archaeology*. She is also the editor of *American Indian Art Magazine* and *Kiva: The Journal of Southwestern Anthropology and History*.



Statesman's nomenclature reads: "Statesman, son of Secretariat"

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Hyperborean	14	5
Hawaiian Cat	5	4
Rougemont	7	4
My Memoirs (GB).....	12	4
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