

## **Kay Patterson Honored by National Pedigreed Livestock Council**

**Industry icon Kay Patterson recently became the first llama breeder to be selected as the 2011 national recipient of the National Pedigreed Livestock Council's (NPLC) Distinguished Service Award. The award was presented at the NPLC annual meeting held in Nashville, TN.**

**The *National Pedigreed Livestock Council* is composed of executive officers of the various breed registries and associations including: dairy, beef, horse, pony, donkey, sheep, goat, llama, and swine species. The year 2011 represents 100 years of sharing knowledge among the breed registries. This milestone was celebrated with a special centennial book highlighting the accomplishments and rich history of this prestigious organization.**

**A mover, shaker, and visionary breeder in two major US industries (llamas and Arabian horses), Kay began her voyage as a pioneer of the llama industry over 45 years ago. In the fall of 1972 Kay and her husband Richard Patterson sold their small herd of guanacos, traveled to the Catskill Game Farm in upper New York State, and purchased nine pair of llamas. Since there were no individual records kept on any of the animals, Kay began writing the first of three Patterson Llama Stud books which eventually would become the foundation of the pedigreed llama industry in this country.**

**In 1973 the Pattersons moving from Richfield, OH to Sisters, OR. Thirty llamas joined 44 Polish Arabian horses caravanning on a non-stop cross country trek to their new home on the High Desert at the base of the snow-covered Cascade Mountains. Patterson Arabians and Patterson Llamas began a serendipitous journey that would bring both breeding programs world acclaim.**

**By 1975, the llama herd, through acquisition and breeding had grown to 500. Using the same principles for breeding that were the basis of their horse program, quality and conformation rapidly improved. Sisters would soon become "Mecca" for llama lookers and a new industry came into being for an animal which originally evolved in North America, but was domesticated 6000+ years ago in South America.**

**For Kay, the search for new bloodstock never ended with special emphasis placed on the females – a lesson learned well from horse breeding mentors the world over.**

**As a leader in the marketing of llamas, Kay began the first national promotion of these unique and whimsical creatures by placing a small ad in Sunset Magazine in 1975. The ad simply stated that "Llamas are Fun" and for the next 10 years – this ad served as the primary catalyst in drawing folks to the Patterson Ranch. Llamas were sold in pairs only, for cash only, and to private parties only (no zoos) making the market stable for many years. The waiting list for "pairs of llamas" grew rapidly and the price per pair was slowly increased.**

**Kay was a founder of the ILA (International Llama Association), the ILR International Lama Registry, and a charter member ALSA (Alpaca and Llama Show Association) as**

well as serving as President of the latter two. Her leadership skills and passion for the livestock industry are very apparent.

**Building effective and successful breeding programs in both the Arabian horse as well as the llama world was one of the most amazing attributes Kay possessed.**

**In 1990-91, Kay built one more ranch and named it Hinterland. For the last 10 consecutive years she showed (1998-2008), Hinterland owned and bred llamas won more national awards than those from any other farm in North America – a record that likely will never be equaled.**

**Kay chose to close this chapter of her life on September 4, 2010, by hosting ‘Walkabout Finale,’ one of the most successful llama dispersal sales in the history of the specie. Breeders from coast to coast, Canada, and New Zealand made one last trek to Hinterland Ranch near Sisters, Oregon to attempt to take home a “piece” of this incredibly successful breeding program.**

**As a fitting close to her daily involvement in the llama industry, Kay stunned the entire crowd by announcing that the proceeds from the last female in the sale would be given to the ILR to help support the new ILR-Show Division. After a hot bidding contest, the beautiful yearling from Kay’s best producing female line sold for \$20,000.**

**The sale may have closed the chapter of Kay’s involvement in the llama industry, but it certainly didn’t diminish the incredible impact she has had on the establishment, propagation, promotion and policy enforcement for the betterment of the llama industry in this county. Without Kay’s involvement these past 45 years, the industry would have likely taken on a much different appearance. Much of the success enjoyed by the llama industry is a direct result of the passion that she has poured into the llama community. She has given for so many years, it is only appropriate that the NPLC honor her with its most prestigious Distinguished Service Award. Congratulations Kay!**