

FREDA GUNST

Freda has lived all 90+ years of her life in the Fraser Valley. She found companionship with horses for the first time when she was a very young girl of 8 years old. In 1945, Freda moved to a farm located at #10 Highway and 152nd Street, and then set up a horse training facility. She gave riding and driving lessons to everyone and anyone who had a desire to learn more about horses. She is still willing to assist anyone who asks.

Freda's love of horses and her gentleness has led her through many, many years of enjoyment. Freda was the founder of the Fraser Valley Jr. Horsemen Club (similar to 4-H club). This was a club for youths 18 years and younger. She belonged to the Palomino Association, BC Half Arab Association, Arabian Horse Enthusiasts, Combined Driving Association.

She has herded horses and cows and provided transportation to safe quarters during the "Flood" in Sumas Prairie in 1948, She rescued horses from the Hastings Park Racetrack during the Barn fires in 1972.

Freda was one of the first women in BC to receive her "Standardbred Harness Driving License" to drive racehorses at Patterson Park Racetrack in Ladner. She was one of 5 Vice-Presidents for many years of the Surrey Fair Board when it moved from Surrey Center to Cloverdale. She was the convenor of the light horse entries for the Lower Fraser Valley Exhibition Society for approximately 12 years. Freda was instrumental in starting the Cloverdale Rodeo Queen Pageant. In later years, Freda had an original 1890 "Surrey" buggy which was ordered from Detroit. With her team of Arabian horses she drove important dignitaries to special events around the lower Mainland some of which include:

Driving Mr. and Mrs. Alex Fraser to the opening of the Alex Fraser Bridge

Opening of the Miniature Railway in Stanley Park

Drove Chief Dan George to his 75th Birthday Celebration

Drove 3 BC Lt. Governors

Opened many Cloverdale Fairs and Rodeo Parades with special Dignitaries such as Surrey Mayors or "Miss Surreys"

Participated in the New Westminster's May Day Parades, Grey Cup Parades, PNE Parades and many weddings

One special time was taking her team of horses and "Surrey" buggy up the service elevator in the Hotel Vancouver to participate in the Cinderella pageant in the Grand Ballroom.

Most recently, Freda was the 2003 Parade Marshall for the Cloverdale Rodeo Parade. In August of 2003, she donated the "Surrey" Buggy and team driving harness to the Surrey Museum.

Some recognition Freda Gunst has already received includes:

1979 - Honored by the District of Surrey in "Recognition of her Outstanding action in the promotion of Equestrian Sportsmanship and Expertise"

1988 - Received an Honorary Membership in the Combined Driving Association in "Recognition of her long Interest and dedication to the sport of Combined Driving"

1997 - Honored by the BC Half Arabian Association for a "Lifetime Dedication to the Arabian Breed"

2003 - We honor Freda Gunst tonight with the Horse Council BC's highest honor, the Horse Person of the Year trophy, sponsored by Capri Insurance. Congratulations!