

# Chairman of the board



*Investing  
in a name*

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**N**o offense to the horse's breeder, but the name Hank Lou Bars didn't exactly roll off the tongue. Of course, coming in the first foal crop of a Texas racehorse named Zippo Pat Bars, out of a halter mare, few would have envisioned the 1969 sorrel colt needed a great name.

Nobody ever accused Jerry Wells of Purcell, Oklahoma, of being short sighted. After purchasing the flashy weanling at the Oklahoma State Fair, Wells decided the colt needed a name that was memorable, and more marketable.

The Investor ushered the Quarter Horse name game into the world of high finance.

For a horse that deeply impacted pleasure horses (he was inducted into the National Snaffle Bit Association Hall of Fame in 1994), The Investor made most of his own impact in the halter ring. A Superior halter horse, he stood grand or reserve champion 45 times out of 50 shows. But his prowess didn't end with good looks.

Bred by Eldon England of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, the AQHA Champion had points in cutting, western pleasure, reining, and hunter under saddle, in addition to winning more than \$12,000 in National Cutting Horse Association competition. In fact, he missed the NCHA Futurity semi-finals by only a point and a half.

Originally bought by trainer Jack Benson for George Pardi of Fredericksburg, Texas, Benson wound up owning the stallion after Pardi dispersed his herd in 1973. Benson and partner Brad McCamy became the major force

behind The Investor during his tenure in Brenham, Texas.

Although he had sired two world halter champions in El Cicatriz, the 1974 Youth World Champion yearling gelding, and the 1980 world champion weanling mare We Are Magic, The Investor's crowning moment came in 1980 at the All American Quarter Horse Congress in the two-year-old snaffle bit futurity. Five of the top six finalists, including the first four, were sired by The Investor.

But perhaps more significantly in his evolution as a sire, 10 years later at the 1990 Congress three-year-old derby, six of the top-10 placers were sons or grandsons of the Texas horse.

In 1989, Benson was killed in a tragic accident, leaving an uncertain future for the proven producer. The decision to sell the 20-year-old stallion opened the door for Dan and Carol McWhirter of Doniphan, Nebraska, and their partner, Wayne Atchley of Elkhorn, Nebraska, to take him north.

(An interesting side note: Five years before, The Investor's half-brother out of the same foal crop, Zippo Pine Bar, moved to Texas from Nebraska.)

Along the way, both in Texas and Nebraska, The Investor passed along his strong hocks, loin and back to a whole series of pleasure champions, along with a 'vested' interest in their names. (Just think of all of you who would have had 'Hank' in your horse's name, if not for that name change.)

Some of his winning offspring include: Superior western pleasure horse Vested Pine, Congress three-year-old derby champion Iota Invest, 1995 high-point western pleasure mare Miss Gold Invested, and world champion and world champion sire Impulsions.

The story continues into other disciplines. Through his daughters, The Investor contributed to winners in cutting, reining and hunter under saddle.

For a re-named horse of mixed heritage, The Investor has had a major impact on the breed. He still is on the

1999 open, amateur and youth leading sires list for performance winners and point-earners. More importantly, three others on those lists are either sons or grandsons. Zippo Pine Bar and his sons or grandsons account for four other places.

The Investor is third (and oldest living) on the all-time listing for siring Register of Merit earners behind Hall of Famers Zippo Pine Bar and Two Eyed Jack.

"He's a horseman's horse – correct on his legs, straight, good bone with strong hocks," Carol McWhirter said. "Balanced overall – smart, strong and athletic."

"The Investors I rode were horses that you didn't force," Jerry Stanford, who trained five of the six horses in the 1980 pleasure futurity, said in the February 1993 issue of *Southern Horseman*. "You could not force them to do anything. You could lead them and make them do anything, but don't try to force them to do anything."

The last two Investor foals hit the ground in 1999. Now, The Investor enjoys retirement at the McWhirter's farm in Nebraska, where they call him the chairman of the board because of the Sinatra-esque way he runs the place.

It looks like Jerry Wells made a good buy when he sent those papers in to get a new name for that good-looking sorrel colt. Thousands of open, amateur and youth riders are reaping the dividends of a good investment. ➤