

December 29, 2024

Dear Horse Council BC Awards Committee,

This is a supporting document for Bonnie Kennedy and the nomination of her for the 2024 Sherman Olson Lifetime Achievement Award. This letter is on behalf of the North Central BC Cadora club in Prince George and all 5 directors give their support of this nomination. The directors are: Dr. Sarah Grey, Katy Ostberg, Jolanda Murfitt, Dr. Catherine Textor and Jodie Kennedy.

Bonnie Kennedy started her riding career with her dad on a ranch outside of Calgary, Alberta and took lessons at Frankie Selinger's St. George's barn in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Bonnie attended Notre Dame University in Nelson, BC to attain her Education degree and started school teaching in Nelson in 1969. Bonnie Kennedy has been active in equestrian clubs since 1970 in the Nelson Riding club; where she instructed, organized clinics, volunteered at and participated in horse shows in the Slocan Valley.

In 1981 Bonnie moved to Prince George with her then husband, and two children. She immediately was enamored with the idea of getting her Level one certification and trained daily with Liz Robinson and a cohort, and was examined in 1982 acquiring her Level One coaching. She joined and helped with the local riding club; Bridlewood Riding club, and the Prince George Saddle club. Both clubs actively hosted small shows, clinics and regular meetings. Bonnie taught lessons to several youth and adults in the Prince George area. She fostered an education program for the Bridlewood Pony Club where the members met weekly for their "lecture" on various topics and stable management sessions throughout the fall, winter and spring. About 40 children and youth participated throughout the year and Bonnie coordinated about 8 adults- providing them with the handouts and materials to teach the sessions to each group (there were several different levels).

Eventually Bonnie could see that the upper level Pony club members would need a x-country course to train on and to do their tests on. She worked tirelessly on negotiations with a local farmer to use his 160 acres to develop into a massive, multi- terrain x-country facility. It took the club about a full year to build- each family was delegated a jump to complete and the course had about 20 solid, correctly constructed jumps built in 1991. The course had a few drop jumps, a variety of options at each fence for differing levels, a water feature where the horses had to jump into the water and out, some hills – both up and down and some fences in the trails and on the fields. It was for the lowest levels up to Prelim. For some of the fences, Bonnie had to go ahead of time to open so the farmer's cattle pastures could be used to gallop over. She had to negotiate the times and days with the farmer so his cattle were moved for each clinic, training day, exam, or competition. This went on for several years until the farmer lost interest in any of it.

Bonnie served as regional testing chair and then National testing chair for Canadian Pony club in the late 1980s and for about 10 years. She attended meetings all over BC and flew to National meetings also. This was prior to email so there were hours upon hours on the phone coordinating the highest levels of exams for western Canadian B and A candidates. She also organized all the mock exams and education opportunities for these riders.

Throughout the years Bonnie has continued coaching youth and adults around northern BC. She has taught approximately 150 people to ride and still now, at the age of 78, she continues to teach 5 lessons per week. She took her first aid last year, and did some updating courses so that she could continue being a National level examiner for Canadian Pony Club- one of the few left. Last summer she travelled to the lower mainland, to Saskatoon and to Cochrane, Alberta to exam upper level pony club members. Each summer she has done a minimum of 3 National exams.

Bonnie was an accredited course designer and has spent countless days supporting local shows in the north with their course designing. Throughout the past 25 years she has been to Quesnel, Terrace, Smithers and all around Prince George to support with their competitions, and preparing their riders. Northern BC has few experts, and Bonnie has filled the role of supporting many of these smaller communities by mentoring them and encouraging them.

Bonnie was instrumental in putting on the equestrian component of the BC Summer games in Prince George. She worked closely with Sandy Underwood to coordinate the Development camp in May 2022 and Bonnie worked closely with Linda Ramsey and Julie Johansen -technical delegate- to put together the derby. Bonnie had a lot of correspondence with Lee Walraven from Maple Ridge, on the course design and he wasn't able to attend all the specs had to be sorted out by phone and email. Bonnie started having jumps assembled and moved to the venue a year in advance. She worked with the city of Prince George to have the venue mowed and prepped. She worked with local volunteer kids and adults to re-paint all the stadium jump materials- an undertaking that took 2 weeks, every day. She also coordinated all supplies and a venue. Bonnie also noticed that some barrier fences might be useful to create a warm up ring and to organize fans and volunteers to stay off the of the open field during the summer games. Bonnie got a lift of lumber donated from Dunkley Lumber and she drove an hour each way to go pick it up. Then she coordinated a work party over a long weekend to assemble 50 free standing fences that act as ring dividers. (each about 4 feet long and 3 feet tall, with feet so they stand on their own). Next, Bonnie coordinated the purchase of a flat deck trailer with sides on it, so that there is storage and ways to move the dividers for our club. This wasn't the first time she secured a storage solution for our club equipment, as in 2012, she helped find an older horse trailer to purchase for our club's brand new plastic updated dressage fence to live in, so that it's transportable to different venues and is stored safely.

Bonnie also served on the Prince George Horse Society board for 10 years. During this time, she worked with a strong team to take over the lease of the entire Prince George Agriplex and land in the centre of the city, as city council no longer wanted to staff it and run it. The volunteer society was formed, staff was hired, and the place continues to operate to this day- allowing a lovely place to board, host shows and major events, and clinics, right in the centre of town. If Bonnie and her team hadn't have stepped up that facility would have become indoor soccer or another hockey arena. This way, equestrian sport is accessible for the people of Prince George, even if you don't live rurally. To this day, there is a school horse program kept at low cost, a therapeutic riding program thriving there, reining, jumping, pony club, dressage, barrels, roping and rodeo all happen there at different times. The BC summer games was hosted there and many high end clinics and shows have been hosted there over the years. Bonnie and her team put together a grant to get 4 massive show barns built in year 2000. Each barn holds 12 horses.

Bonnie attended the BC summer games in Maple Ridge and was the barn security for a week – looking in on the horses and watching over their care. She lived on site and camped, despite being 78

and the weather being SO warm. She actively prepared two of the Prince George competitors and supported all the youth there.

Through Bonnie's support and vision and tireless work, our club still hosts 2 major Horse Council BC shows per year- one in June and one in September. Bonnie prepares all the dressage tests, hires the judges, creates the entire program and prizelist. Bonnie stores all the ribbons and prizes and orders more as needed. She has helped at each event, in the office scoring, or handing out packages to riders. Each of our shows has 2 days of dressage and a full derby course day.

Through Bonnie's support of the rising stars program, we have had several young riders from this area, continue on to provincial and national success, or careers in horses. Our area has produced two Grand Prix dressage riders who competed at CDI levels, one century rider (83 year old with her 25 year old gelding), ten B and A level Pony Club members, ten coaches, 3 accredited officials, 2 professionals who run their own training indoor arena boarding facilities, and many lifelong riders and beloved volunteers who keep coming back 30 years later, to help out at our competitions.

Lastly, Bonnie attended the BC summer games in Maple Ridge and was the barn security for a week – looking in on the horses and watching over their care. She lived on site and camped, despite being 78 and the weather being SO warm. She actively prepared two of the Prince George competitors and supported all the youth there.

Thank you for considering our nomination of Bonnie Kennedy for the Sherman Olson Lifetime Achievement Award.

Sincerely,

Jodie Kennedy

NCBC Cadora

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