



CTBA Member
PROFILE

OREGON
BREEDERS
LEAVE
LASTING
LEGACY

JANET COSGROVE

BY EMILY SHIELDS

Janet Cosgrove and her late husband, Pat, started with just one injured mare and worked their way up to being the Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders Association's Oregon Breeder of the Year in 1995. More than two decades later, their operation is still making headlines, as the Cosgrove-bred Grinning Tiger won the June 6 Crystal Water Stakes at Santa Anita in a 92-1 upset.

The Cosgrove couple, who married in 1959, only knew

the world of Quarter Horses until a friend sold them Little Mindy, "a Thoroughbred mare with a crippled leg," said Janet. Little Mindy was in foal to the stakes-winning stallion Mud and Water.

"That was our first Thoroughbred," Cosgrove said. "We bred her back to Mud and Water several times to put the babies through the Oregon sale."

The Cosgroves soon acquired a second mare, then a third. One of the mares was Cheeky Greek, by Darn Cheeky. She was bred to stakes-placed winner Restless

Run to produce standout runner Greek Native. The Oregon-bred was sent to auction in 1984 but did not sell.

"We raised horses to sell," Cosgrove said. "He didn't bring what we thought he was worth. So we brought him home to race him. He was the first horse where we had to do that."

Greek Native went on a tear, winning his first nine races, including the Grants Pass Futurity and Salem Futurity in 1985 and the Oregon Derby in 1986. He became the first horse to win Oregon's Triple Crown: the Mt. Hood Handicap, Preview Stakes, and the Derby.

"We got hooked then," Cosgrove said.

The Cosgrove couple traveled to Kentucky to receive their TOBA award in 1995, which Janet felt was warranted due to Pat's studious nature.

"He did a lot of research," she said. "He read all these magazines, *The Blood-Horse*, the *Thoroughbred Times*. Later he went online and looked."

One stallion who drew Pat's eye was Smiling Tiger, the grade 1-winning millionaire standing at Harris Farms in Coalinga.

"We really couldn't afford him," Cosgrove said. "We went into debt to breed to him, but I'm glad we did. The rest is history."

The Cosgroves bred their winning Pioneering mare Karlee's Kitten to Smiling Tiger in 2014. The resulting foal, a chestnut named Grinning Tiger, quickly started to earn back his keep.

The gelding broke his maiden at Arapahoe Park



COURTESY COSGROVE FAMILY

The late Patrick Cosgrove and his wife, Janet, bred Crystal Water Stakes winner Grinning Tiger

in Colorado, rolling home seven lengths clear as a heavy favorite in his second start. He was fifth in the track's Gold Rush Futurity, but returned in the fall to win the \$11,000 Willamette River Stakes and \$16,400 Bill Wineberg Stakes at Portland Meadows. He kept the momentum going through 2018, running second in a pair of Oregon stakes before winning the \$20,000 Fall Challenge in November and the \$15,000 Oregon His Stakes in December.

Things went awry when Grinning Tiger went to Turf Paradise for the winter of 2019 and was claimed away for \$10,000.

"The trainer didn't think anyone would claim him because he hadn't been running very well, but they did," Cosgrove said. "In the long run I'm glad he was claimed because he never would have gone to California with us or raced like he's racing now. So it was good for the horse, but I cried."

Now in the barn of trainer Anthony Saavedra for owner Tyree Wolesensky, Grinning Tiger won a pair of allowance optional claiming races at Los Alamitos and finished second in the \$100,702 California Flag Handicap at Santa Anita. He continued to sprint through early 2020, running fourth in the grade 2 Palos Verdes, but Saavedra was desperately looking for a two-turn contest. The trainer tried five times to get a race to fill, and finally got Grinning Tiger into the \$101,500 Crystal Water over a mile on the grass. Grinning Tiger was 92-1.

Racing on the lead from the start, Grinning Tiger and jockey Heriberto Figueroa pulled away from all challengers to score by 1¾ lengths. Cosgrove was planning on watching the race live from her Yamhill, Ore., home but got distracted gardening and missed it.



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The Cosgroves were the Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders Association's Oregon Breeder of the Year in 1995

"My sister called me on the phone, and that was the first I heard," Cosgrove recalled. "She was screaming and yelling."

Grinning Tiger has eight wins, four seconds, and a third in 27 starts for earnings of \$209,801. His dam, Karlee's Kitten, is still living at Cosgrove's eight-acre Emerald Knoll Farm, named after Pat's grandfather's farm in South Dakota. Karlee's Kitten has a 2-year-old filly by Harbor the Gold named Pat's Gold who is in training at Emerald Downs, and the mare has a foal by 2005 Kentucky Derby winner Giacomo at her side.

"I bred her back to Giacomo," Cosgrove said. "I wanted to send her back to Smiling Tiger, but I couldn't work it out where I could afford it. After the race they wanted to talk about next year. Hopefully, we can get her bred to him in 2021."

All three of Karlee's Kitten's starters have won.

Even with Pat gone, Janet continues in the horse industry. She has been living on the farm since 1965 and keeps at least two mares on hand.

"Pat always liked to have at least two foals on the ground so that they get competitive," she explained. "He didn't like to raise one alone."

The other mare is the winning Montbrook daughter Brinks Baby, who is the dam of four-time winner Super Statement. In 2017, Super Statement ran third behind Grinning Tiger in the Bill Wineberg Stakes and went on to be stakes-placed in 2018 as well.

After his death in 2017, Pat left behind a loving family and generations of Thoroughbreds that ran well in Oregon. His memorial stated: "Pat's family and horses were the great joy of his life."

With Grinning Tiger's continued success, Pat's legacy lives on. **CTB**