



CTBA Member
PROFILE

A NEW
LIFE
JOURNEY
WITH
HORSES

LINDA TEMPLETON

BY EMILY SHIELDS

Linda Templeton thought she had done it all. She owned a cattle ranch, had a riding horse, and had been to the rodeo and various cattle shows. But when Thoroughbred breeder Terry Lovingier asked her if she had ever been to the races, Templeton admitted she hadn't.

"He said, 'Get your purse; I'm taking you to a horse race,'" Templeton recalled. "I went, and I fell in love."

Lovingier had purchased Templeton's cattle ranch in 2005 and converted it into

a Thoroughbred breeding farm—Lovacres Ranch.

"I'd asked him what he was going to do with the acreage, and he said he raised Thoroughbreds," Templeton said. "I asked what he did with them, and he said race them. That's when I had to say I'd never been."

By the end of the year, Templeton owned part of four horses with Lovingier, competing in the name of Templeton Hors-

es. She deeply loved them all. California-bred Sweet Forever was in that group.



Linda Templeton

The daughter of Rio Verde was a winner in 2006, and her name is stamped on Templeton's license plate, which the owner has transferred from car to car over the years.

Another mare Templeton had great affection for was River Kiss, by Awesome Gambler. The dark bay mare was second in the grade 3 Sorrento Stakes in 2011 and multiple stakes-placed in 2012.

"With her, you would say, 'Give me a kiss!' and she would kiss you," Templeton recalled. "I just love them all, but I can't own them all."

Lovingier's trainer, Walther Solis, invited Templeton to Kentucky to attend a horse auction.

"I'd been to heavy equipment auctions, cattle auctions, and farm auctions, but I'd never been to a horse auction," Templeton said. She did not come home empty-handed.

She was inspired by a yearling filly by Pollard's Vision, which reminded her of Seabiscuit's famous jockey, Red Pollard. Templeton went to just \$1,700 to get the filly out of the winning Pine Bluff mare Pine Forest, naming her Linda's Bluff.

"I brought her back and raced her," Templeton said. An incident in a trailer ended Linda's Bluff's career after two starts, but with Lovingier standing some of Califor-



PHOTOS COURTESY OF LINDA TEMPLETON

Linda Templeton with Governor Goteven following the filly's victory in the California Thoroughbred Breeders' Association Stakes at Del Mar

nia's elite stallions, Templeton had plenty of options. The mare's first foal, Time Linda Goteven, was a 2011 filly by Time to Get Even.

Time Linda Goteven didn't win, but has proved to be a valuable broodmare. Her first foal to race, Governor Goteven, a daughter of Lovacres stallion Govenor Charlie, debuted with a win at Santa Anita May 29, scoring by a neck at 18-1. Lisa Bernard trains, and while Templeton has been happy with all of her trainers—Walther Solis, Gary Sherlock, and Caesar Dominguez over the years—Bernard has something special.

"She is very gentle with the horses, and so they are very gentle in return," Templeton said. "They seem to really like her."

That maiden win was just the beginning for Governor Goteven, a strapping and leggy sort.

"She's just about 16 hands," Templeton said of the filly. "I love Govenor Charlie. He is big and black just like her."

Govenor Charlie has the pedigree to become any kind of stallion. The son of two-time Breeders' Cup Sprint (G1) winner Midnight Lute is out of Silverbulletway, a daughter of Storm Cat and the Hall of Fame mare Silverbulletday. Govenor Charlie backed up his pedigree by earning \$506,650 and scoring in the grade 3 Sunland Derby in 2013. He was grade 2-placed as a 4-year-old before retirement.

Govenor Goteven is now trying to follow in her sire's footsteps after adding the \$98,000 California Thoroughbred Breeders' Association Stakes at Del Mar Aug. 1. Under Tiago Pereira, Govenor Goteven pulled away in the lane to score by 3½ lengths in the 5½-furlong sprint. She is now



Ladies Day at the races at Del Mar: Linda Templeton, center, flanked by racing buddies Diane Feaskin, right, and Linda Salvador

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unbeaten in two starts with earnings of \$87,000.

Having success at Del Mar is a bit of a coming-home experience for Templeton, whose late husband, Robert, owned Templeton Grading and Excavation. That company famously helped build places such as Ocean-side Boulevard and the houses across from Del Mar racetrack. Robert died in 2002, leaving a gaping hole in the community, but Templeton has been able to start a new life journey with the horses.

She considers the defunct Hollywood Park as her favorite track.

"It was very good for the horses, very few got hurt," she said, adding, "I love Santa Anita and Del Mar too."

While Hollywood Park was still open, Templeton had two nice horses

win: Awe Golly Molly, by Awesome Gambler, who was a stakes-placed winner of \$103,490, and Anita Brewski, who Templeton owned outright when he scored by 2¾ lengths on that track in 2009.

The surge in California traffic has hampered Templeton's ability to enjoy the horses as much.

"I love going to the track, where everybody knows everybody," she said. "It is wonderful. I used to get up and drive to Hollywood Park, watch them train in the morning, have breakfast with the trainer, then go home, do my bookkeeping, shower, and head back to the track for eight races. Of course, I was younger then, but traffic was much better. It changes. Life changes."

Last year Templeton—who has five grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren—spent a fair bit of time traveling between her Lake Havasu, Ariz., home, her Aguanga, Calif., home, and visiting

family in Arkansas and Oregon. Despite the busy schedule, she still found time to visit Govenor Goteven around once a month.

"They are like your children," she said of the horses. "It's hard not to get too attached."

Govenor Goteven was her only horse until Templeton purchased a colt at the recent Northern California yearling sale. Though owners hadn't been able to attend the races at Santa Anita or early in the Del Mar meet due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Templeton was in the grandstand for Govenor Goteven's CTBA Stakes.

"It's not as much fun to just watch on TV, but I need to keep my toes in," she said. "I don't care how old I get, I'm not going to give it up. I just really enjoy the business." **CTB**