



Dear SNHSA members,

As our 2023 season comes to an end, we are looking for nominations for the annual **Memorable MastersTrophy**.

Nominations are due no later than 12/31/2023

Every rider can remember their first special lesson horse. The one that saved you over and over and tirelessly forgave each mistake you made. The riders of AJA Equine started the perpetual trophy in 2022 to commemorate a special horse, Buddies Surprise, who, for most of them, was their first introduction to horses and took care of them in their first lessons. Each year, this new perpetual trophy will commemorate Surprise's legacy and will be awarded to another special horse that embodies their fellow peers to achieve their goals during the season.

Surprise touched the hearts of every rider, trainer, and community member who met him. Surprise embodied the definition of a unicorn, with a stunning mane and tail to match. The community mourned, alongside his home barn, Ironwood Events Center, when he passed in 2021. Surprise was an impeccable ambassador for the American Bashkir Curly breed with his gentleness, patience and ability to make a horse-lover out of anyone who had the honor of interacting with him. His steady disposition provided riders of all ages and experience levels to achieve their goals; ranging from standing like a statue as eager kids pick hooves for the first time, to boldly jumping ditches and coops with a rider's first time in cross country. Surprise personified grace through all that he did and equally extended grace to every rider who learned a new skill because of his patient nature.

Did you have a special lesson horse that taught you or others your first lessons? Please submit your nomination of a special lesson horse that we can commemorate this year and tell us why you think this horse embodies the legacy that began with Buddies Surprise.

Please send nominations to Susan at susanhhowe@gmail.com by Dec. 31, 2023.

We can't wait to hear your story!

-Liz