

Shorty Koger/Rein In Cancer Announce: Fund-Raising Goal is Reached for Shirley Bowman Nutrition Clinic

For the last few years, Shorty Koger of Shorty's Caboy Hattery has been raising money to fund the Shirley Bowman Nutrition Clinic at the University of Oklahoma Cancer Institute, in memory of her sister. In May, her goal was reached.

Koger is quick to give credit to everyone who has donated or helped with fund-raising throughout the years and the story of the road to success makes for a poignant journey.

At the 2006 AQHA World Championship Show, amateur exhibitor Tracie Anderson ordered a custom hat from Shorty's Caboy Hattery. A few weeks later, she stopped by Shorty's store in the OKC Stockyards to pick it up and saw a memorial to Shorty's sister, Shirley Bowman, who had lost a battle with cancer.

"Clearly she was raising money," Tracie remembers. "And I asked her, 'What are you doing with the money you're raising?' Shorty said, 'I've been waiting for somebody to walk through the door and tell me what to do with it.'"

Tracie said, "Well, I'm here, so write the check." She wasn't really kidding. Tracie is also the Clinical Operations Director for the OU Cancer Institute, the University of Oklahoma's cancer research and treatment facility that was in need of funding.

As they talked further, Tracie found that Shorty's sister had not had health insurance, and Shorty had helped her negotiate the complex process of getting treatment. It was during Shirley's treatment that Shorty was diagnosed with cancer, herself. Shirley passed away and Shorty recovered, and was left with a growing passion for helping patients who didn't have the means to pay for treatment."

That's where the OU Cancer Institute comes in. "We are the only place in the state where an unfunded patient can come and receive care," Tracie explains.

The two of them saw a vision for the future, based on input from the medical team. "Cancer is not just about the day you get therapy," said Dr. Robert Mannel, Director of the OU Cancer Institute. "We want to offer a patient-centered approach, where we're not just looking at providing medical therapy, but also patient and family counseling, nutrition services, social services, etc."

The problem is that this takes a lot of resources, which must have alternative funding, since there's no traditional funding from insurance companies to cover it. With that in mind, Shorty and Tracie set out to fund the Shirley Bowman Nutrition Clinic at the OU Cancer Institute. Their fund-raising goal was \$250,000. If they could reach that, there were funds to

match it for a \$500,000 endowment to provide nutrition services for the institute's cancer patients.

It's a critical need. "Nutrition means that you can get through therapy," Mannel explained. "Nutrition means that your immune system stays activated so you can fight the cancer with all your internal resources."

The ball was rolling and Shorty continued to raise money toward the goal, with Tracie working behind the scenes. Then, in 2007, Cheryl Magoteaux became involved and the three created **Rein In Cancer**, which began to quickly generate even more funds toward the goal through fundraising efforts at equine events. Cheryl orchestrated fundraisers at various National Reined Cow Horse Association and National Reining Horse Association events throughout the country, and the annual National Reining Breeders Classic in Katy, Texas. Even the American Quarter Horse Association joined the cause, with a special day at its World Championship Show.

This May, with the completion of Remington Park's **Betting on A Cure** Day, which benefited both Rein In Cancer and Ally's House, the goal was finally reached.

"When you connect a passion with an opportunity, you can do great things," Mannel continued. "People who are passionate about their horses are people emotionally connected to life. They resonate with those who are sick and who need help."

Shorty was emotional when she heard that enough money had been raised for the Shirley Bowman Nutrition Clinic. "Words cannot express how grateful I am to all the people who have helped make this dream a reality – especially those in the equine industry. I want to give back because of what everyone has given me," Shorty shared. "My heart goes out to all the people who can't afford treatment or do not have insurance. I always wonder if Shirley would be here today if she had had insurance and went to the doctor sooner."

Tracie agreed and added, "Seeing the patients that benefit from this service has made all of the hard work so rewarding, and we are so grateful to all the individuals, groups and clubs that have aided us so far."

Cheryl Magoteaux said, "We have realized that although reaching the goal is an incredible accomplishment, this battle goes on and, now, we simply don't need to stop. We've taken steps to have **Rein In Cancer** become a 501C3, tax deductible corporation, so we can offer tax benefits to people who donate. Right now, we have the momentum and we want to keep going. One in three women and about one in two men will develop cancer at some time in their life. Nearly half the patients who develop cancer will die of their disease.

"That fact alone is reason enough to continue," said Magoteaux. "Reaching this goal was huge and I know I, like many others, was honored to be able to be a small part of it. But we see it as a first step, now. There's always tomorrow, and always another need in this battle. **Rein in**

Cancer is our way to keep doing our part - and we are committed to keep giving the horse world a chance to make a difference."

For information on **Rein In Cancer**, visit the web site at www.reinincancer.com.