



DOUG BURGE

CTBA PRESIDENT

## REMEMBERING MARY CLARE SCHMITT

**W**e are saddened with the recent loss of a close member of the CTBA, Mary Clare Schmitt, who passed away Jan. 10. Clare was an avid supporter of California racing and breeding and an active partner in Sierra Sunset Stable, which raced many California-bred stakes winners. Her husband, George, who I consider a dear friend, has been a longtime CTBA board member and has dedicated countless hours to this association. I have asked George to share thoughts, which appear below.



COURTESY OF THE SCHMITT FAMILY

George and Mary Clare Schmitt enjoying one of their many days at Del Mar

On Jan. 10, 2023, after a battle with incurable cancer, Clare died at 77 with me at her side holding her hand. She was the love of my life, and we were together over 57 wonderful years. She was a true fighter—the strongest pain medication she took was Tylenol. What a tough lady she was.

Clare loved life, especially her children and grandchildren, all of whom got their final orders from Clare in the days before she died... and all of us knew what we called Clare's glare, a look to be wary of by all.

She traveled the world with me as we built wireless networks in 12 countries around the world. She was a great hostess and entertainer, and everyone was treated equally in the Schmitt house.

Clare enjoyed different cultures and meeting people everywhere she went. She had a great love for

basketball and went to as many Saint Mary's basketball games as she could, including her last in early December, when Saint Mary's beat Missouri State. She was honored by the school naming the women's basketball team in her name and memory.

Her adventures in horse racing began at the Alameda County Fair in 1985, when she won eight races in a row. It was nearly 20 years later that we became owners in a partnership with Phil Lebherz.

Our first trip to the post was a wire-to-wire win with a filly named Sierra Babe at Bay Meadows in 2004. We continued to have success as owners, winning 37 stakes races with horses named Sierra Sweetie, Sierra Sunset, Cambina, Frumious, Run Brother Ron, and Izzy Rules, all of whom won stakes.

With the retirement of Sierra

Sunset, who won the 2008 Rebel Stakes, a major prep for the Kentucky Derby, we became breeders. We had reasonable success with stakes horses Princess Bertrando, Touched by Autism, Tchula Sunset, and Rocketann, among others.

Clare was kind to every foal and layup at our place at Lake Tahoe, not caring if they were stakes winners or claimers.

Clare enjoyed watching our foals grow to be racehorses and enjoyed the pomp and ceremony at the track when we had runners. We raced all over the country, and she enjoyed the travel and meeting new people wherever we were.

She will be missed by all of us in the family and her many friends and relatives, especially by me, who had a love affair with Clare for over 57 years. Rest in peace, my love.

—George Schmitt