

Mats Genberg / 2015-04-03

SUSANNA SANTESSON HAS LEFT US

This morning Susanna Santesson should have woken up with hundreds of horse racing friends in Beverly Hills, USA. Instead she fell asleep for ever in a hospital in Germany - much too young. Susanna's absence will leave a hole in the festivities during the coming Darley Award weekend. She will in fact, leave a large hole in the racing world. Even for those who have never heard her name.



© 2015 by Nils Rosenkjaer

Susanna Santesson in Doha, February 2015

Susanna was a person who spent her life working for the parts of racing that is not so often seen in the major headlines of the sport. She was not involved in the million dollar horses or the big deals.

Still she was more important to racing than many of the people we read about daily.

Susanna was the kind of person who made people realize that racing is actually a sport. She spent her life working in and for organizations that cared for the enthusiasts.

The people that like herself do what they do out of love - not money or honor.

She was secretary general for Fegentri (the world's amateur jockey organisation).

She was a very important part of the Sheikha Fatima bin Mubarak Ladies world Championships.

She chaired the European Association of Racing Schools, and was instrumental in the creation of the world's first global organisation for racing academies.

She held a number of positions in German racing.

She was always present at our meetings of IFAHR.

She was one of the strongest supporters ever of women in horse racing.

The list can go on for ever.

Hundreds of young amateurs and apprentices have Susanna to thank for them being able to leave their home turf and see the racing world. She travelled with them everywhere and helped them cross language barriers and realize that as long as you have your saddle in your carry-on luggage and can make the weight you will be fine.

Racing is racing.

Everywhere.

And Susanna will be there.

I last met Susanna Sunday night in Dubai. Me and Catarina had dinner together with her at the terrace of the Meydan racecourse. The evening after the World Cup - we were more or less the only ones in the restaurant.

She said she was happy that we were there, as eating alone was the only thing she didn't like about her constant traveling. We spoke about her health.

She looked tired and coughed. She said that it was just a cold that wouldn't go away but that she would see a doctor.

We left the table and said that we would meet again for breakfast in Los Angeles later the same week.

Two hours ago I just learned that this would not happen.

And that Susanna has taken off on the longest journey of them all.

Mats Genberg - secretary The International Arabian Horse Racing Federation (IFAHR)

on behalf of the IFAHR Executive Committee:

Sami Al Boenain

Genny Haynes

Wieger de Ruitter

Ahmed Al Hammadi

Yves Plantin

Ziya Adalar