



Article as written by Carolyn Capone, for NSBA  
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*It must have been fate. When Robin DeGraff thinks of how just five minutes might have made the difference in finding this "one-in-a-million horse" - she's a believer.*



"From the time I was a little girl, I wished for a dream horse. As an adult, that 'dream horse' came to mean one that would be competitive at a national level in both the NSBA and the AQHA. I could just imagine having my horse's name called out at the Congress or World Show," Robin says. "And to think that I almost missed him."

She was at a local Quarter Horse show, on her way to the warm-up pen before her equitation class, when Robin saw Ohio trainers Rick and Heidi Cecil preparing a tall, brown colt for a longe line class.

"I ran all the way back to my horse trailer to get my fiancé to come help me with my horse, so I could go watch this really cool colt in his class. Needless to say, the colt - Indian Artifacts - went home with us that day. Even now, I just keep thinking that if I had been there five minutes earlier or five minutes later, I would have missed him altogether."

Indian Artifacts, a 1995 stallion now affectionately called "Chief," is by multiple World Champion Artful Move and is out of a thoroughbred mare named Elaine Myrna. "I really like the fact that there is such 'correctness' in Chief's background. I've seen his dam on video, and she's a nice, big mare with a lovely stride. I think Artful Move is one of the great ones - he's there year after year, even winning after being brought back out of retirement. His offspring are not only proving themselves in the Hunter Under Saddle, but in the jumping and other events as well," Robin says.

The Cecils were a natural choice to train Chief when it came time to start the colt under saddle, and according to Heidi, he was an easy horse to train. First, his temperament is like that of a big, old gelding. He's such a gentleman. And even with all his height, his lope is very natural and slow-legged so it was easy to get him to lope slow with his head down." She adds that it's also nice that this horse takes very little warm-up time before showing.

In fact, Robin says not many people know that her 1998 AQHA World Champion in Junior Hunter Under Saddle suffered colic that year and was only ridden for two weeks prior to showing at Congress. Despite the limited training time, Chief was Reserve Champion in the Miller's Hunter Under Saddle Futurity and then went on to win the World.

The rest of Chief's show record also speaks well for the young stallion's talent. This year's wins include a Gulf Coast Circuit Championship in Junior Hunter Under Saddle and Reserve Championships at the Tom Powers in the Non Pro Maturity and in the Open Maturity at the Ohio Futurity. In 1998, Chief finished third in the NSBA high point standings after winning the Three-Year-Old Open at both the Southern Belle and the Ohio Futurity as well as earning a Reserve at the Tom Powers Futurity and at the Congress. Multiple futurity wins in 1997 earned Chief a tie as the NSBA's Reserve High Point Two-Year-Old Hunter Under Saddle horse.



*Trainer Heidi Cecil showed Indian Artifacts to win the 1999 Gulf Coast Circuit Championship in Junior Hunter Under Saddle. Also pictured are owner Robin DeGraff with her fiance David Dooge and trainer Rick Cecil*

A member of AQHA for 16 years and of NSBA for 10, Robin is quick to point out that she and the Cecils are big fans of the NSBA futurity program. "We think the NSBA is excellent for young horses because the events start late enough in the summer that you don't need to push young horses. We also like the fact that the



*Chief is known around the barn for his gentle demeanor with the children. Here the big brown horse tries to sneak a treat at the Ohio Futurity.*

classes offer warm up time once the entries are in the pen and that the classes usually don't have too many in the pen at a time," Rick explains. "It's beneficial for both owners and trainers that we're riding for money rather than just points so people can recoup some of their expenses, too."

For Chief, a busy 1999 breeding season meant fewer futurities and shows. "He's had quite a different year," Robin says. "I really didn't anticipate such a heavy breeding schedule, but it seems there are many people with mares that are 15.2 to 16.2 who would like to see some additional height and stride in their offspring to help compete in Hunter Under Saddle, Equitation, Pleasure Driving and Hunter/Jumper events."

Chief's first foals are due in 2000, and Robin says she really looks forward to the impression her stallion may be able to make on the English type and All-Around type Quarter Horse. "He is from proven bloodlines, and he certainly has that 'look.' With Chief's size and natural ability, presence and willing attitude, we hope many of these traits will be passed on."

Indian Artifacts is standing the 2000 breeding season at Rick and Heidi Cecil's facility in Wadsworth, Ohio. For more information on Chief, please contact Robin at (419) 668-2072 or visit their website at [www.whatwork4.com](http://www.whatwork4.com).