

SOUTHWEST



Trainer James
 'Sweet' Hodges

MARSHALL BEVINS PHOTOS

Sweet Success

*James and Phyllis Hodges
 work hard at horses*

BY GARY McMILLEN

DETOUR OR DESTINY? Sometimes an unexpected twist or turn can affect a life's direction. For instance when the steam boiler exploded at Itta Bena High School in rural Mississippi one September morning, the blast would push a 17-year-old boy named James "Sweet" Hodges toward an unanticipated career as an accomplished trainer of Thoroughbred racehorses.

The high school building closed for repairs, and Hodges was not content to sit around idle. He used his forced vacation to pick cotton.

"I had my usual chores at home, but I went out there in the cotton fields and picked for three weeks until I couldn't feel my hands anymore," Hodges remembered. "Some of those fields were small, and some were so

(continued on page 34)

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THE EQUATION FOR SUCCESS



- Stallions** Clear Creek Stud offers stallions with attractive pedigrees and race records, & whose progeny perform among the top ranks of their peers.
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- = Success!**

Custom For Carlos

More Than Ready-Meadow Oaks



GRADED STAKES WINNER IN 1ST CROP!

BIG WORLD, Juvenile Winner of \$200,000 G3 Tempted Stakes at Aqueduct after a \$83,000 Md Sp Wt at Saratoga defeating two TAPIT fillies; one a half sister to BERNARDINI as well as a BERNARDINI half sister to SHACKLEFORD.

THE LEADING LOUISIANA FIRST CROP SIRE RANKED 22ND NATIONALLY

\$3,000 Live Foal 9/1 or \$3,500 LFSN
Nominated to Breeders' Cup

Half Ours

Unbridled's Song – Zing



2015 LEADING LOUISIANA SIRE 69% WINNERS FROM STARTERS

2015 Juveniles include 3 stakes horses 3 winners on Louisiana Champions Day!

PLATINUM LADY won Louisiana Champions Day Ladies Sprint, JOKAMO'S SONG won Louisiana Champions Day Sprint, RIVER ROAD won MSpWt in his 1st attempt, PLUS two more 2YO winners since!

Sire of 2015 BSCOL Sale Topper The Top Sire by Total

2yos have sold for \$190K, \$85K, \$75K, etc.

\$4,500 Live Foal 9/1 or \$5,000 LFSN
Nominated to Breeders' Cup

Star Guitar

Quiet American-Minit Towinit



FOUR-TIME LOUISIANA BRED HORSE OF THE YEAR

ALL TIME LEADING LOUISIANA-BRED MONEY EARNER

EARNED \$1.75 MILLION

24 WINS FROM 30 STARTS

Colts from STAR GUITAR'S 1st Crop sold for \$95,000 & \$40,000 at Keeneland in September!

\$3,500 Live Foal 9/1 or \$4,000 LFSN
Nominated to Breeders' Cup

G.W.'s D'Oro

Medaglia d'Oro - Sarah Lane's Oates



Son of MEDAGLIA D'ORO Out of SARAH LANE'S OATES

\$1,500 Live Foal 9/1 or \$2,000 LFSN
Nominated to Breeders' Cup

G.W.'s Skippie

Skip Away-Logical Reasoning



67% Winners • \$78,657 Ave Earn Sire of SKIP THE PINOT

\$1,500 Live Foal 9/1 or \$2,000 LFSN
Nominated to Breeders' Cup

Lion Tamer

Will's Way-Tippecanoe Creek



Ave Earn/Starter \$37,653 Sire of HEAVY ON THEMISTER

\$2,000 Live Foal 9/1 or \$2,500 LFSN

Ole Rebel

Carson City-Velvet Tulip



SIRE 8% STAKES HORSES Sire of WARREN'S REBEL

\$1,000 Live Foal 9/1 or \$1,500 LFSN



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2015 LEADING SIRE IN LOUISIANA

Go to BloodHorse.com for daily updated sire lists

Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB, Sire), Where Stands	2016 Stud Fee	Rnrs/ Wnrs	Stakes Wnrs/ Wns	Rstrct SW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	2015 Earnings	Foals	Cumulative Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	HALF OURS (03, Unbridled's Song), Clear Creek Stud	\$5,000	143/66	6/7	5/6	(Gentlemen's Bet, \$314,690)	\$3,013,717	*310	12	1.06	1.26
2	E DUBAI (98, Mr. Prospector), Elite Thoroughbreds	\$3,500	145/83	3/4	2/3	(Dubacious, \$170,740)	\$2,794,714	*959	29	1.30	1.22
3	SONGANDAPRAYER (98, Unbridled's Song), The Stallion Station @ Copper Crowne	\$4,500	157/74	2/2	1/2	(Raised a Secret, \$150,038)	\$2,783,321	*854	34	1.17	1.49
4	D'WILDCAT (98, Forest Wildcat), Whispering Oaks Farm	\$3,500	96/61	3/5	1/3	(Amelia's Wild Ride, \$291,930)	\$2,520,923	*383	14	1.40	1.27
5	CLOSING ARGUMENT (02, Successful Appeal), Whispering Oaks Farm	\$4,000	98/55	4/7	2/4	(Smack Smack, \$292,500)	\$2,240,747	*404	17	1.25	1.20
6	YANKEE GENTLEMAN (99, Storm Cat), Le Mesa Stallions	\$3,500	130/66	2/2	2/2	(Yankee Dealer, \$161,650)	\$2,069,532	*475	19	1.16	1.23
7	MASS MEDIA (01, Touch Gold), Red River Farms	\$1,500	91/46	1/1	1/1	(Liberty Fuze, \$110,300)	\$1,709,279	*176	4	1.10	1.05
8	SUN KING (02, Charismatic), Elite Thoroughbreds	\$2,500	95/41	1/1	0/1	(Bold Cait, \$142,604)	\$1,523,403	257	2	0.71	1.01
9	LONE STAR SPECIAL (05, Malabar Gold), Horse of Course	\$1,500	21/16	2/5	1/2	(Mobile Bay, \$614,290)	\$1,199,081	36	2	1.50	1.11
10	TENPINS (98, Smart Strike), Elite Thoroughbreds	\$3,000	87/34	1/1	1/1	(Kate Is a Ten, \$124,050)	\$1,166,419	*338	8	0.91	1.07
11	GOLD TRIBUTE (94, Mr. Prospector), Red River Farms	\$2,000	35/17	2/4	1/2	(The Pickett Factor, \$298,640)	\$1,053,209	*475	12	0.97	1.07
12	GOOD AND TOUGH (95, Carson City)	Died, 2012	62/33	0/0	0/0	(Grande Basin, \$91,565)	\$1,002,965	*462	13	1.10	1.12
13	MY PAL CHARLIE (05, Indian Charlie), Elite Thoroughbreds	\$2,500	61/29	0/0	0/0	(Charlie's Affair, \$71,200)	\$990,164	89	1	0.83	1.18
14	FOREFATHERS (04, Gone West), Red River Farms	\$2,000	66/34	1/1	1/1	(Nadia Anne, \$91,920)	\$945,930	107	1	0.66	1.16
15	RUN PRODUCTION (00, Saint Ballado), Whispering Oaks Farm	\$2,500	56/30	0/0	0/0	(Running for Boston, \$57,900)	\$858,212	161	7	1.19	1.03
16	IDE (93, Forty Niner)	N/A	72/26	0/0	0/0	(Ide Be Cool, \$74,500)	\$841,258	570	15	1.09	1.07
17	LEWIS MICHAEL (03, Rahy), Circle H Farms	\$2,500	41/19	1/1	0/1	(Lewys Vaporizer, \$240,080)	\$802,528	100	3	0.82	1.14
18	BIG TOP CAT (02, Storm Cat)	Died, 2012	64/27	1/1	1/1	(Thiscatcanjam, \$88,100)	\$731,818	147	3	0.73	0.86
19	MY FRIEND MAX (92, Danzig)	Died, 2013	34/18	0/0	0/0	(Grace's Madelyn, \$83,595)	\$648,108	215	3	0.99	0.91
20	LION TAMER (00, Will's Way), Clear Creek Stud	\$2,500	52/20	0/0	0/0	(Heavy On Themister, \$109,420)	\$646,362	120	2	0.76	1.07
21	GREELEY'S GALAXY (02, Mr. Greeley), Averett Farm	\$3,500	24/14	0/0	0/0	(Mr. Masterpiece, \$107,394)	\$587,134	91	1	1.17	1.11
22	OLE REBEL (99, Carson City), Clear Creek Stud	\$1,500	40/14	1/1	1/1	(Big Dog Doug, \$60,820)	\$582,488	84	2	0.73	0.84
23	PORTO FORICOS (95, Mr. Prospector)	Died, 2013	40/21	0/0	0/0	(Social Misfit, \$91,725)	\$564,778	237	5	0.96	1.14
24	AFTERNOON DEELITES (92, Private Terms)	Pnsd	33/15	1/1	1/1	(Afternoon Tango, \$109,940)	\$495,764	*602	25	1.10	1.32
25	BEHINDATTHEBAR (05, Forest Wildcat), Le Mesa Stallions	\$2,000	33/16	0/0	0/0	(Leavethetip, \$81,300)	\$467,200	68	0	0.59	0.89
26	CHATAIN (03, Forest Wildcat), Chad & Pat White Farms	\$1,000	33/17	0/0	0/0	(Stewie Little, \$57,950)	\$448,046	60	0	0.61	0.98
27	ETBAUER (96, Silver Deputy)	N/A	24/13	0/0	0/0	(Believeinsomething, \$90,590)	\$411,242	133	3	0.69	0.72
28	TIME BANDIT (96, Time for a Change), Heritage Stud	\$1,000	31/12	0/0	0/0	(Ty's Bandit, \$81,740)	\$392,111	258	3	0.84	0.90
29	¶ CUSTOM FOR CARLOS (06, More Than Ready), Clear Creek Stud	\$3,500	20/5	1/1	0/1	(Big World, \$185,600)	\$338,799	48	1	0.81	1.14
30	GRAND APPOINTMENT (98, Unbridled), Fallen Oaks Farm	\$1,500	24/7	0/0	0/0	(Jsloukovrurshoulida, \$114,000)	\$327,914	75	2	0.95	0.88
31	SORCERER'S STONE (03, Gulch)	N/A	27/14	0/0	0/0	(Ben's Magic Stone, \$74,725)	\$304,465	75	0	0.45	0.62
32	TETON FOREST (01, Forestry), Elite Thoroughbreds	\$1,500	26/12	1/1	0/1	(Risky Forest, \$52,000)	\$300,927	*212	3	0.78	1.04
33	CROWNED KING (00, Barkerville), McKeever Racing Stable	\$1,500	4/2	1/4	0/1	(String King, \$257,000)	\$290,240	32	1	1.57	0.64
34	RULER'S COURT (01, Doneraile Court)	N/A	23/13	0/0	0/0	(Stella's Ruler, \$57,055)	\$285,717	113	0	0.59	0.76
35	¶ TIZ THE ONE (07, Tiznow), Red River Farms	\$1,500	19/10	0/0	0/0	(Conquest Tiz One, \$38,709)	\$278,064	32	0	0.66	0.97
36	ROYAL STRAND (IRE) (94, Royal Academy), Double Dam Farm	\$750	24/10	0/0	0/0	(Long Lost Friend, \$50,520)	\$275,854	91	2	0.89	0.79
37	HONOR GLIDE (94, Honor Grades)	Died, 2012	18/10	0/0	0/0	(Canofspots, \$71,390)	\$268,792	174	1	0.71	1.03
38	INTEREST RATE (03, Storm Cat)	N/A	15/9	0/0	0/0	(Spirit of a Cat, \$59,940)	\$265,979	54	0	0.50	0.77
39	MAUK FOUR (00, Boston Harbor)	N/A	23/11	0/0	0/0	(Who Dat Tiger, \$41,400)	\$264,541	55	0	0.76	0.92
40	SAINT AFLEET (01, Northern Afleet)	N/A	21/8	1/1	0/1	(Dazzled Saint, \$81,800)	\$262,007	69	3	0.72	0.88
41	MR. LIVINGSTON (97, El Prado)	Died, 2011	23/9	0/0	0/0	(Professor Palmer, \$50,020)	\$252,642	*158	1	0.62	1.01
42	PROUD AND TRUE (94, Mr. Prospector)	N/A	14/8	0/0	0/0	(Boudreaux, \$63,416)	\$229,898	238	4	1.03	0.97
43	IN A WALK (89, Chief's Crown)	N/A	16/5	0/0	0/0	(Itsy Bitsy Walk, \$114,545)	\$228,837	265	4	0.71	0.74
44	HARBORAGE (03, Monarchos), Kraft Farm	\$1,000	22/9	0/0	0/0	(Jason's Arrowhead, \$41,750)	\$223,970	53	1	0.70	0.85
45	RAHY'S SECRET (98, Rahy), Triple H Farm	\$750	9/3	0/0	0/0	(Cajun Maid, \$72,780)	\$188,387	35	0	0.73	0.73

(continued from page 32)

big you couldn't see the end of the row. I picked until it got dark and I couldn't see anymore."

There were very few mechanical pickers in those days, and the back-breaking labor under a relentless sun paid \$2 for a 100-pound sack.

"I could pick a hundred pounds a day,

but some of those girls could pick 200 pounds," Hodges said with a laugh. "It took a couple of weeks, but when my wages got to \$27, I told the man I was finished and went over to a farm and bought my first horse. He wasn't much to look at but he was mine."

With his nickname "Sweet" borrowed from his cousin, Hodges graduated from

high school and hit the rodeo circuit at dusty venues on the Mississippi Delta. The busted ribs from riding bulls and roping calves were worse than picking cotton. Itta Bena is a name borrowed from the Choctaw Indians that inhabited Yazoo County that translates to "home in the woods," but for Hodges it would no lon-

(continued on page 36)

Special Note For Sire Lists:

For stallions that stand, will stand, or stood (deceased) in Louisiana (stallions that are dead or exported prior to 2011 are excluded), and have runners in North America. Listed below are all available statistics for the Northern Hemisphere through Thursday, December 31, 2015. As supplied to Blood-Horse by The Jockey Club Information Systems Inc., include adjusted money from Japan, Hong Kong, and Singapore. Adjusted earnings are put on par with average North American earnings from the previous year. For example, the average North American purse in 2014 is \$21,617 or 45% of the 2014 average purse in Japan. To put earnings on par, all Japanese progeny earnings are multiplied by 45% before being credited to a sire's progeny earnings. Hong Kong earnings are adjusted by 19%; Singapore by 54%. Current year stakes winners include all N.H.-foaled stakes winners worldwide and any S.H.-foaled horses that won a N.H. stakes. *Foal counts include Southern Hemisphere. Cumulative stakes winners includes all countries. (A ¶) indicates a sire represented by his first crop to race.

*AVERAGE-EARNINGS INDEX and COMPARABLE INDEX: Lifetime AVERAGE-EARNINGS INDEX indicates how much purse money the progeny of one sire has earned in relation to the average earnings of all runners in the same years; average earnings of all runners in any year is represented by an index of 1.00; COMPARABLE INDEX indicates the average earnings of progeny produced from mares bred to one sire, when these same mares were bred to other sires. Only 32% of all sires have a lifetime AVERAGE-EARNINGS INDEX higher than their mares' COMPARABLE INDEX.

MAGNA GRADUATE WELCOME TO OKLAHOMA



MAGNA GRADUATE

Honor Grades - Peacock Alley, by Fast Play

VERSATILE GRADE 2 SW OF \$2.5 MILLION • 12 TRIPLE DIGIT BEYERS

Sire of Hopeful S-G1 Runnerup Magna Light

Sire of TEN Stakes Horses in 2015 (Five Stakes Winners), including **Grade 3** Iowa Derby SW **JESSICA'S STAR** (\$410,260), NCR SW **MAGNA BREEZE** (\$169,624), two-time SW **SILVER MAGNA** (\$143,300), SWs **BELLARMINE** (\$329,675) and **TUBA**.

Sire of 5% SWs/FOALS, 12% Stakes Horses/Rnrs, over 12% 2YO SHs/Rnrs and averaging \$42,000+/Rnr.

2016 FEE: \$2,500 LIVE FOAL

NOTIONAL

In Excess (Ire) – Truly Blessed, French Deputy

#1 Oklahoma Sire by 2015 Earnings ~ More than \$2.3 Million

#1 Oklahoma Sire by 2015 Winners & Repeat Winners

#1 Oklahoma Sire by 2015 Juvenile Winners

Sire of outstanding 2015 Three-Year-Old **FAR RIGHT** (\$640,846), winner of the \$300,000 **Grade 3** Southwest S. and \$150,000 Smarty Jones, 2nd to Triple Crown winner **AMERICAN PHAROAH** in the \$1,000,000 **Grade 1** Arkansas Derby! Oklahoma's Most Popular Stallion of 2015 by Mares Bred

2016 FEE: \$3,000 Live Foal



KENNEDY

A.P. Indy – Lovely Regina, by Deputy Minister

By Red Hot Sire of Sires A.P. INDY

Three-Parts Brother to Champion BERNARDINI

A.P. INDY's Classic-Winning Champion 3YO **BERNARDINI**, whose first five crops include **42 SWS** – **30 GRADED SWS** – **TEN GRADE/GROUP 1 SWS**, incl. two **GRADE 1** Travers SWs & Millionaires **STAY THIRSTY** and **ALPHA**. **BERNARDINI's** pedigree is in **HIGH DEMAND** – weanlings average **\$162,000+**, yearlings average **\$202,000+** and 2YOs average **over \$293,000!**

First Start — First Winner Coming from next to last to win at 5 1/2F in 1:07.89

2016 FEE: \$2,000 LIVE FOAL



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Beggs, Oklahoma

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2015 LEADING SIRES IN OKLAHOMA

Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB,Sire), Where Stands	2016 Stud Fee	Rnrs/Wnrs	Stakes Wnrs/Wns	Rstrct SW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	Cumulative				
							2015 Earnings	Foals	Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	POLLARD'S VISION (01, Carson City), Mighty Acres	\$3,000	115/62	3/3	1/3	(Twentytwentyvision, \$257,480)	\$2,961,419	*602	17	1.33	1.24
2	NOTIONAL (04, In Excess), Rockin' Z Ranch	\$3,000	131/71	1/2	0/1	(Far Right, \$485,080)	\$2,531,347	247	5	0.90	1.15
3	LATENT HEAT (03, Maria's Mon), River Oaks Farm	\$3,500	119/64	0/0	0/0	(Rocket Heat, \$187,080)	\$2,139,324	*291	4	0.93	1.07
4	READ THE FOOTNOTES (01, Smoke Glacken), River Oaks Farm	\$3,500	81/41	2/2	2/2	(Between the Lines, \$156,900)	\$2,133,388	*302	17	1.38	1.18
5	MAGNA GRADUATE (02, Honor Grades), Rockin' Z Ranch	\$2,500	93/53	2/2	0/2	(Magna Light, \$139,334)	\$2,025,321	*180	6	1.03	1.12
6	CACTUS RIDGE (01, Hennessy)	Pnsd	69/42	3/4	1/3	(Cactus Kris, \$193,054)	\$1,744,108	*427	20	1.27	1.05
7	KIPLING (96, Gulch), Mighty Acres	\$2,500	82/37	0/0	0/0	(Dariel, \$94,800)	\$1,316,693	311	9	1.05	0.88
8	DON'T GET MAD (02, Stephen Got Even)	Died, 2013	58/31	2/2	1/2	(What Lola Wants, \$108,856)	\$1,162,355	*158	6	1.18	0.96
9	ORATORY (02, Pulpit), River Oaks Farm	\$3,500	46/25	2/4	1/2	(Monster Sleeping, \$132,570)	\$1,053,639	*175	4	1.23	1.15
10	TACTICAL CAT (96, Storm Cat), Raywood Farm	\$1,000	62/27	1/3	0/1	(Heykittykittykitty, \$348,890)	\$942,105	573	24	1.03	1.21
11	MR. NIGHTLINGER (04, Indian Charlie), JEH Stallion Station-Oklahoma Div.	\$2,500	57/29	0/0	0/0	(Lingering Smoke, \$72,304)	\$796,705	112	1	0.61	0.88
12	EVANSVILLE SLEW (92, Slew City Slew)	Died, 2012	46/26	0/0	0/0	(Slew Hunter, \$62,901)	\$672,608	*520	25	1.06	0.91
13	LUCKY LIONEL (93, Mt. Livermore)	N/A	30/19	0/0	0/0	(Tight Britches, \$66,143)	\$582,188	355	9	1.13	1.21
14	SAVE BIG MONEY (03, Storm Cat), Mighty Acres	\$2,000	31/18	0/0	0/0	(Vivid, \$67,589)	\$527,696	60	1	0.74	1.03
15	SERVICE STRIPE (91, Deputy Minister), Caines Stallion Station	\$1,000	31/16	0/0	0/0	(Navy Nurse, \$77,040)	\$477,030	375	18	1.16	1.01
16	FREEFOURINTERNET (98, Tabasco Cat)	N/A	23/16	0/0	0/0	(Catalactic, \$76,560)	\$441,705	86	1	0.88	0.93
17	LIQUOR CABINET (IRE) (01, Hennessy), Oklahoma Equine	\$1,000	25/13	0/0	0/0	(Abigail Lane, \$62,538)	\$377,215	66	1	0.59	0.90
18	KING OF SCAT (96, Eastern Echo), Raywood Farm	\$1,000	23/16	0/0	0/0	(Okie Princess, \$74,395)	\$354,849	210	6	0.71	0.75
19	SPECIAL RATE (00, Pulpit), Glasses Creek Ranch	\$3,000	37/12	1/1	1/1	(Special U F O, \$72,716)	\$348,260	135	2	0.56	0.54
20	FOREIGN POLICY (02, Danzig), River Oaks Farm	\$1,250	11/5	0/0	0/0	(Ribbon of Darkness, \$192,976)	\$345,334	26	1	0.88	0.88
21	BURBANK (93, Wild Again)	N/A	30/12	0/0	0/0	(Heisenberg, \$60,819)	\$306,322	164	3	0.73	0.73
22	THE VISUALISER (03, Giant's Causeway), Mighty Acres	\$1,500	20/6	1/1	1/1	(Zealous Vision, \$111,933)	\$301,661	33	1	0.67	0.94
23	C'MON TIGER (03, Storm Cat), JEH Stallion Station-Oklahoma Division	\$1,000	19/11	0/0	0/0	(Ventures Galore, \$62,421)	\$274,205	48	0	0.43	0.76
24	DIAMOND (95, Mr. Prospector), Oklahoma Equine	\$1,000	18/8	0/0	0/0	(Drowningndiamonds, \$81,741)	\$257,739	296	5	1.05	1.03
25	AFFIRMATIF (06, Unbridled's Song), Caines Stallion Station	\$1,000	21/8	0/0	0/0	(From Out There, \$47,458)	\$225,573	42	1	0.50	0.87
26	TALES NOT TOLD (02, Tale of the Cat), Legend Farm	Private	11/8	0/0	0/0	(Sugar Shaker, \$38,745)	\$191,992	56	0	0.50	1.05
27	CHITZO (05, Forest Wildcat), River Oaks Farm	\$2,000	11/5	0/0	0/0	(Smooth Chiraz, \$67,500)	\$155,636	23	0	0.43	0.89
28	SASHA'S PROSPECT (96, Mr. Prospector), Charlton Ranch	\$1,000	23/7	0/0	0/0	(Whimiscal Miss, \$23,523)	\$152,603	*118	1	0.66	0.78
29	WESTERN EXPRESSION (96, Gone West), Kirton Farms	\$1,500	17/6	0/0	0/0	(Western Tryst, \$46,509)	\$146,552	*328	4	1.09	1.29
30	GOING WILD (02, Golden Missile), Equitech Services	\$1,000	9/7	0/0	0/0	(Myshipcomesin, \$29,325)	\$142,690	20	1	0.64	0.73

(continued from page 34)

ger be home. He headed west to work on a horse farm in Louisiana. On a summer night at Evangeline Downs, he witnessed the competition of his first Thoroughbred horse race.



Phyllis Hodges makes mating decisions for their broodmares

"Watching those horses run got my attention real quick," Hodges admitted. "I told myself that is what I wanted to do."

Starting at the bottom was nothing new to the young man that had dragged a cotton sack in 90 degree heat and humidity. He found work breaking and prepping horses. He shuttled back and forth to the family farm in Mississippi. Pillar to post, Hodges found work wherever he could and saved enough money to purchase a Quarter Horse named Little Red Man for \$350 that he ran in match races on the bush tracks. At Clarence Downs (a pari-mutuel track that was open for one year) Hodges trained his first winner, a horse named Recovered.

His one-horse stable grew to seven and then a nice Quarter Horse named Go Splash Go reeled off a series of wins at Delta Downs. Hodges was on the radar. The phone started ringing. With numerous clients in the oil and gas industry, Hodges' stable grew to more than 40 horses. Then his rapid rise was decimated by the oil bust in the late '80s.

(continued on page 38)

2015 ARIZONA SIRES BY WINNERS

Sire	Rnrs	Wnrs
Top Hit	36	23
Distorted Reality	37	21
Margie's Wildcat	26	11
Deputy Wild Cat	21	10
Chelokee	19	9
Demon Warlock	14	9
Supah Blitz	13	5
Maybry's Boy	7	5
Benton Creek	12	4
Chestertown Slew	12	4
Ez Dreamer	9	4
Red Sky's	9	4
Hidden City	6	4
Bulldogger	4	3
Millennium Wind	9	2
El Mirage	4	2
Deposit Ticket	2	2

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Zarb's Dahar (inside) winning the 2005 Louisiana Champions Day Sprint

(continued from page 36)

Time to tough it out—Hodges was down to five horses.

“I owed the feed man. I owed the horse shoer. I owed the vet. I owed the bedding man. I owed money to everybody that let me,” Hodges remembered. “Hell, hard times weren’t anything new to me.”

In 1991 he abandoned his trailer on the backstretch of Delta Downs and shipped his handful of stock to Louisiana Downs where he lived in a tack room. Perseverance finally paid off. The bedrock foundation of his career came with the opportunity to train for Foxwood Plantation.

“They handed over 12 to 15 very decent horses, and I went to work,” Hodges recalled. “And the best part was that they were great people to train for.”

Foreign Production, Zarb's Dahar, and Star Production were in the lot and they developed into stakes winners.

Old-school trainers such as Hodges display an economy of words, but the memory of one particular horse can get him talking.

“Zarb's Dahar was my first real good horse and I mean real good,” Hodges said with emphasis of the multiple stakes winner who reeled off 11 consecutive victories at Louisiana Downs and is the only horse to win the Cajun Stakes three times.

“In the winner's circle I would be speechless about his ability and how he dominated other horses.”

Hodges has been married to his wife, Phyllis, for 25 years. The way that they met is not material for a romance novel. Phyllis owned a string of Quarter Horses and her trainer was about to turn the operation over to his 19-year-old son. That business model did not appeal to her. She began

calling other owners and breeders, looking for a recommendation for a trainer. The same name kept coming up—“Sweet” Hodges. Phyllis hesitated to make the call.

“I had a problem talking to a man over the phone for the first time and calling him ‘sweet.’”

Born in Arkansas, Phyllis complements the country lifestyle of the husband and wife team, while adding considerable confidence and poise to their public image. The woman can cook a pot of collard greens for Thanksgiving dinner and can recite the bloodline chart of Triple Crown winner American Pharoah back four generations.

“I'm not bashful to admit trial and error when it comes to my knowledge of pedigree,” Phyllis said. “I read most everything about breeding that I could get my hands

(continued on page 40)

2015 ARKANSAS SIRES BY WINNERS

Sire	Rnrs	Wnrs
Portobello Road	46	31
Brahms	65	27
The Daddy	43	27
Primary Suspect	42	17
Zarbyev	36	14
High Cascade	33	13
Hesabull	32	11
Richter Scale	26	8
Jonesboro	21	8
Commander's Shoes	14	7
Midway Road	16	6
A. P. Delta	11	6
Cinnamon Creek	10	6
A. P. Million	10	4
Dove Hunt	10	4
Ile St. Louis (CHI)	8	4
Shady Grove	12	3
Explosive Truth	6	3
Rumors of Peace	6	3
Morluc	5	3
Top Venture	10	2
Sea Prince	9	2
Father Steve	7	2
Laffer	7	2
Pomatini	4	2
District	3	2
Istintaj	3	2
Southern Forest	3	2
Harperstown	2	2

LOU HODGES JR./HODGES PHOTOGRAPHY



The Hodges with three-time stakes winner Mr. L. S. Shoe

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2015 LEADING SIRE IN TEXAS



Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB, Sire), Where Stands	2016 Stud Fee	Rnrs/ Wnrs	Stakes Wnrs/ Wns	Rstrct SW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	2015 Earnings	Foals	Cumulative		
									Silks	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	TOO MUCH BLING (03, Rubiano), Lane's End Texas	\$4,000	75/45	5/5	5/5	(Blings Express, \$97,820)	\$1,686,585	154	17	1.22	1.12
2	VALID EXPECTATIONS (93, Valid Appeal)	Died, 2015	57/39	3/7	2/3	(Ivan Fallunovalot, \$312,200)	\$1,518,306	645	40	1.22	1.15
3	EARLY FLYER (98, Gilded Time), Valor Farm	\$2,500	66/38	3/4	2/3	(He's Comin in Hot, \$161,010)	\$1,321,895	241	15	0.83	0.91
4	CONGAREE (98, Arazi), Lane's End Texas	\$5,000	57/35	1/2	0/1	(Shrinking Violet, \$181,851)	\$1,244,735	*338	13	1.35	1.43
5	MY GOLDEN SONG (03, Unbridled's Song), Valor Farm	\$4,000	29/14	2/3	1/2	(Thegirlinthat song, \$192,500)	\$737,407	78	7	1.14	1.06
6	INTIMIDATOR (01, Gone West), Asmussen Horse Center	\$1,500	74/29	0/0	0/0	(Lady Emily Sage, \$38,595)	\$674,907	180	5	0.58	0.78
7	GRASSHOPPER (04, Dixie Union), Lane's End Texas	\$3,500	37/18	2/5	1/2	(Texas Chrome, \$182,562)	\$615,779	52	2	0.69	1.00
8	SILVER CITY (06, Unbridled's Song), Valor Farm	\$3,000	22/11	1/4	0/1	(Promise Me Silver, \$287,260)	\$549,390	32	1	1.22	0.92
9	UNCLE ABBIE (97, Kingmambo), Key Ranch	\$2,000	37/16	2/2	1/2	(Ibaka, \$116,269)	\$467,089	220	6	0.66	0.64
10	LUNARPAL (02, Successful Appeal), Lone Star Farms/Rafter S Ranch	Private	25/12	0/0	0/0	(Annagrace' spal, \$56,600)	\$371,490	106	2	0.80	0.96
11	GAFF (02, Maria's Mon), Seguin Horse Center	\$1,500	27/14	0/0	0/0	(Hook, \$53,710)	\$330,690	60	0	0.64	1.01
12	SCRIMSHAW (00, Gulch), R&S Racing	\$1,500	25/14	0/2	0/0	(Shyloh's Friend, \$47,850)	\$284,022	*186	3	1.01	0.91
13	LITTLE EXPECTATIONS (97, Valid Appeal), Asmussen Horse Center	\$1,500	23/11	1/1	0/1	(Born to Disco, \$69,538)	\$281,726	194	5	0.77	1.00
14	JET PHONE (01, Phone Trick), Valor Farm	\$2,000	17/10	0/0	0/0	(Aces N Jacks, \$39,166)	\$270,973	32	3	1.15	1.20
15	SENECA JONES (90, Alydar)	Died	10/8	0/0	0/0	(Seneca Destiny, \$125,650)	\$220,491	239	9	0.91	0.83
16	WIMBLEDON (01, Wild Rush), Key Ranch	\$2,000	11/8	0/0	0/0	(Martys Wimbledon, \$64,885)	\$215,115	106	4	0.76	0.76
17	DRUMS OF THUNDER (04, Concerto)	N/A	15/6	0/0	0/0	(Witt Six, \$101,619)	\$211,094	28	0	0.49	0.34
18	CAPTAIN COUNTDOWN (96, Relaunch), Double S Thoroughbred Farm	\$500	23/6	0/0	0/0	(Our Romeo, \$27,810)	\$177,675	181	2	0.50	0.66
19	EVIL MINISTER (02, Deputy Minister), Eddie George Ranch	\$750	8/2	0/0	0/0	(Country Minister, \$152,656)	\$167,307	22	1	1.00	0.40
20	TOUCH TONE (98, Pick Up the Phone)	N/A	6/4	0/0	0/0	(Turn Up the Lights, \$55,300)	\$158,715	107	2	0.68	0.71

(continued from page 38)

on. You know that necessity is the mother of invention so when we switched over to a concentration on Thoroughbreds, I had to do some serious homework. It was more complicated and the challenge made it more interesting to me."

Phyllis attends the sales with Sweet and makes all the decisions when it comes to mating their broodmares.

"My husband has the trainer's license, and I have the owner's license. We worked out a deal. He stays out of my kitchen and I stay out of his shed row," Phyllis said, articulating their separate roles. "Of course, we don't always agree, but we discuss everything and make decisions together. Communication is the secret to any kind of success whether it's a business or a relationship, and marriage is a working relationship. Sometimes we work out a compromise. We are not bullheaded about stuff. You have to give and take."

Sweet makes the final decisions at the sales with little regard for pedigree.

"I know that the stud and mare are important," he said, "but the world is full of expensive, well-bred horses that can't run a lick. I want to see the physical individual that catches my eye, the way he stands and walks into the ring. Most of the horses in the sales have enough pedigree to be good Louisiana-bred horses. I go through the catalog and mark about 60 or 70 horses, then make my rounds and look at them as far as conformation. Finally, I set a price in my mind. If I don't get my price, I just move on."

The Louisiana breeders incentive program is at the core of Hodges' success. He has notched 22 wins in Louisiana-bred



Phyllis Hodges' silks head to the post at Fair Grounds

stakes races over the course of his career.

"The program that I have settled into is the Louisiana-bred program," Hodges explained. "Those are the sales where I make my picks. Maybe I have just been lucky, but the stakes races are where you ultimately want to get to with your horse. The Louisiana breeders program is a proven success. When other states around the country copy what you are doing, then it has to be on the right track."

Remember the steam boiler at Itta Bena High School and Hodges' practical solution to the time on his hands? Farm boys that grow up to be horse trainers often approach each day with a no-nonsense practicality. There are two mismatched chairs in the tack room of Barn 35 at Fair

Grounds Race Course & Slots. In other words, it's not a visitor's entertainment center or a lounge for idle conversation. The uncluttered room has rows of saddles, halters, and blinkers on two of the walls. The aging desk is lonely for piles of paper, hosting only December's training chart for the 15-horse stable. Want a cup of coffee and watch the morning news? Walk over to the track kitchen.

The Hodges' no frills horse farm is a reflection of the spartan tack room. Located near Haughton, La., the small farm is their permanent residence where Phyllis (supported by one assistant) oversees planting rye grass every year and fertilizing every five years across the 13 acres of land. There are six paddocks, each having its own turn-out shelter to keep horses out of the weather. An exerciser, an equipment shed, and a hay barn complete the building inventory.

"Haughton is a growing metropolis," Phyllis said with a wink. "Just last year the city put in its second stop light."

Bred, raised, named, and owned by Phyllis, Mr. L. S. Shoe is the current big horse in the barn. The 3-year-old gelding has won four consecutive races, three of them stakes.

"A horse that can successfully handle different challenges is a special kind of horse," Phyllis said with pride. "I realize that he is a once-in-a-lifetime kind of horse. The first name that I submitted for him was Mr. LSU, but it was rejected. I figured with a name like that he would at least have a fan base."

Hodges, who has produced three years where his horses earned more than \$1 million, knew he had something special

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2015 LEADING SIRES IN NEW MEXICO

Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB, Sire), Where Stands	2016 Stud Fee	Rnrs/ Wnrs	Stakes Wnrs/ Wns	Rstrct SW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	2015 Earnings	Foals	Cumulative Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	DIABOLICAL (03, Artax), A & A Ranch	Private	67/41	3/4	3/3	(Diabolical Dame, \$234,200)	\$1,438,004	101	9	1.03	0.96
2	ATTILA'S STORM (02, Forest Wildcat), A & A Ranch	Private	55/30	5/5	5/5	(Stormin the Jewels, \$167,103)	\$1,320,345	117	13	1.33	0.81
3	DESERT GOD (91, Fappiano), A & A Ranch	Pnsd	36/21	2/2	1/2	(Proceed, \$96,000)	\$865,504	259	25	1.48	0.74
4	QUINTON'S GOLD (97, Carson City), Doubletree Farm	\$5,000	38/22	1/1	1/1	(Gold Boundry, \$122,741)	\$823,402	106	8	1.47	0.86
5	THE WAY HOME (04, Giant's Causeway), Doubletree Farm	\$2,500	47/24	0/0	0/0	(E P Who, \$80,495)	\$623,907	97	4	0.91	1.01
6	SOUTHWESTERN HEAT (04, Gone West), A & A Ranch	\$2,500	30/16	2/2	2/2	(Gator Heat, \$90,890)	\$549,465	*44	2	0.75	0.92
7	SING BABY SING (03, Unbridled's Song), Doubletree Farm	\$2,000	31/21	0/0	0/0	(The Lone Roo, \$54,771)	\$533,783	45	0	0.63	0.85
8	WEATHER WARNING (04, Storm Cat), Double LL Farm	\$3,000	43/13	1/1	1/1	(Storm Warrior, \$112,036)	\$488,240	*125	4	1.10	1.05
9	PRO PRADO (01, El Prado), Hourigan Horse Farm	\$2,000	19/12	1/1	1/1	(Wyatt, \$181,620)	\$466,320	61	1	0.77	0.87
10	ROLL HENNESSY ROLL (00, Hennessy), A & A Ranch	\$3,500	32/12	0/0	0/0	(Twixy Roll, \$71,844)	\$406,549	119	10	1.02	1.01
11	YOUR EMINENCE (01, Saint Ballado)	Died, 2012	28/13	1/1	1/1	(Golly Gee, \$114,354)	\$404,689	165	3	0.69	0.74
12	PREMEDITATION (99, Afternoon Deelites), A & A Ranch	\$2,500	16/9	1/1	1/1	(Mr. Wizard, \$174,849)	\$400,123	75	6	1.10	0.83
13	DEVON LANE (93, Storm Cat)	Died, 2012	30/16	0/0	0/0	(Picasso's Bro, \$55,046)	\$395,275	440	14	0.77	0.80
14	DOMINIQUE'S CAT (97, Storm Cat)	N/A	24/16	0/0	0/0	(Dom Juan, \$46,716)	\$367,248	100	2	0.83	0.62
15	RIGHT RIGGER (06, Unbridled's Song), Lady T Ranch	Private	5/4	1/1	1/1	(Tea Light, \$138,830)	\$336,226	6	1	2.47	0.74
16	SILVER WAGON (01, Wagon Limit), Hunter Creek Farms	\$2,500	15/10	0/0	0/0	(The Big Deluxe, \$179,192)	\$318,603	58	1	1.13	1.30
17	REAL DANDY (02, Yankee Victor)	N/A	21/8	0/0	0/0	(My Dandy Girl, \$163,467)	\$305,838	36	1	0.67	1.14
18	DOME (98, Storm Cat), Double LL Farm	\$2,500	19/13	0/0	0/0	(King of Cool, \$59,017)	\$269,680	209	5	0.74	0.83
19	ELUSIVE JAZZ (01, Elusive Quality)	N/A	9/4	0/0	0/0	(My Bikini Fell Off, \$186,204)	\$257,700	20	0	0.80	0.82
20	TO TERAS (00, Unbridled's Song)	N/A	18/8	0/0	0/0	(Whatakiss, \$53,542)	\$231,930	71	1	0.81	0.58
21	FIREJACK (02, Dixieland Band), Hourigan Horse Farm	\$900	19/7	1/1	1/1	(Miss E Bar, \$94,780)	\$224,690	65	1	0.48	0.84
22	¶ SHAME ON CHARLIE (04, Indian Charlie)	N/A	2/2	2/3	1/2	(Indian Tiva, \$163,638)	\$219,085	3	2	5.19	0.77
23	FUSAICHI ZENON (JPN) (97, Sunday Silence), Weatherly Horse Farms	\$2,000	17/5	0/0	0/0	(Sunday Rose, \$55,620)	\$216,067	80	3	0.72	0.86
24	GHOSTLY MOVES (92, Silver Ghost)	N/A	19/5	0/0	0/0	(Veil's Vengeance, \$52,409)	\$165,393	229	21	1.01	1.03
25	SONG OF NAVARONE (04, Sultry Song)	N/A	9/5	0/0	0/0	(Terras Song, \$62,781)	\$160,769	13	0	0.84	1.09
26	RAPPER S S (05, Monarchs)	N/A	7/5	1/1	1/1	(The Waki Rapper, \$81,516)	\$159,544	13	1	0.70	1.21
27	COPELAN'S PACHE (95, Copelan), Doug Lee Farm	Private	17/7	0/0	0/0	(Go Autumn Go, \$27,833)	\$151,984	114	1	0.56	0.86
28	TAILFROMTHECRYPT (98, Cryptoclearance), Marr's Breeding Farm	Private	12/8	0/0	0/0	(Tulie Creek Crypt, \$32,160)	\$146,344	34	0	0.49	0.78
29	LESTERS BOY (96, Cee's Tizzy)	Died, 2012	15/5	0/0	0/0	(Lady La Joya, \$33,045)	\$142,451	82	4	1.01	0.62
30	GOLDEN RANSOM (99, Hennessy)	N/A	15/7	0/0	0/0	(Zapped, \$28,110)	\$137,997	108	0	0.48	0.84

the first time he worked the son of Forefathers a half-mile.

"This is one time I will brag about a horse," Hodges said. "Chances are I will never get another horse that can do what this horse can do. A lot of horses can fool you and work a good three-eighths, but his first time working four furlongs was with another good horse in the barn and he just played with him. He was a dominating individual from the get-go."


After winning a maiden special weight at Louisiana Downs, Mr. L. S. Shoe captured the Louisiana Stallion Stakes, the Louisiana Champions Day Juvenile Stakes, and the LA Bred Premiere Night Prince Stakes at three different race-tracks.

The wife offered the last word concerning the long train of the bloody hands picking cotton and sleeping in a tack room that her husband survived over the years.

"He absolutely never thought about quitting," Phyllis said. "This game is a sickness that gets in your blood. I can speak as an owner and as a breeder. You always have an excuse or an explanation

in the back of your mind as to how a horse performs. It's a funny way of explaining it, but that's how I have kept my love and interest alive for the horses. Believe me, this is not a business, a sport, industry, or hobby for the faint of heart. You have to be open and accepting to sticking around through the hard times and the setbacks.

The people that come and go in this game don't have the patience or the heart."

Leaving the barn and headed home to prepare dinner, Phyllis added, "We think we are doing everything right with our horses. In the end that's the best approach I can describe. I know at least we are trying." 



'Sweet' Hodges picked cotton to earn the \$27 for his first horse