

Southwest

ARIZONA ARKANSAS COLORADO KANSAS LOUISIANA
MISSOURI NEW MEXICO OKLAHOMA TEXAS

Mighty Good



Dr. Warren Center, right, and Randy Blair, second from right, collect a breeders' award for stakes winner Gianna's Dream

DUSTIN ORONA PHOTOGRAPHY

For nearly two decades,
Mighty Acres has been
among the leading
breeding operations
in the Southwest

BY DENIS BLAKE

IN A BUSINESS where a head bob at the track or a foaling issue at the farm can dramatically swing fortunes, sustained success can be a challenge.

The added hurdles of running a breeding operation in a regional market perhaps explain why despite having a strong state-bred program and one of the Southwest's top tracks in Remington Park, the Oklahoma Thoroughbred scene only counts a handful of truly commercial breeding farms. Overcoming the odds for almost 20 years, owner Dr. Warren Center and farm manager Randy

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2020 LEADING SIRES IN NEW MEXICO

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Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB,Sire), Where Stands	2021 Stud Fee	Rnrs/ Wnrs	BT SWnrs/ Wns	Rstrct SW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	2020 Earnings	Foals	Cumulative		
									Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	JUSTIN PHILLIP (08, First Samurai)	N/A	111/58	2/2	1/2	(Just Might, \$168,275)	\$1,956,669	203	7	1.01	1.09
2	MORNING LINE (07, Tiznow)	Died, 2019	88/34	2/2	1/2	(Rowdy Yates, \$146,158)	\$1,629,804	*183	7	1.07	1.17
3	ATTILA'S STORM (02, Forest Wildcat), A & A Ranch	\$4,000	91/50	4/4	4/4	(Aisle Runner, \$153,133)	\$1,448,168	312	22	1.02	0.80
4	SOUTHWESTERN HEAT (04, Gone West)	Died, 2017	36/15	1/1	1/1	(Wheredoesthecashgo, \$92,943)	\$478,497	*121	6	0.74	0.94
5	ABSTRACTION (10, Pulpit), Doubletree Farm	\$3,500	44/23	0/0	0/0	(Evacuee, \$57,643)	\$472,852	79	1	0.80	0.96
6	INDIAN FIREWATER (07, Indian Charlie)	Died, 2017	45/19	1/1	1/1	(Comic Hot Toddy, \$78,364)	\$438,984	105	4	0.60	1.03
7	SHAME ON CHARLIE (04, Indian Charlie), Ernest Riggs Farm	Private	17/10	1/1	1/1	(Effort N Results, \$136,560)	\$435,112	35	5	1.26	0.60
8	QUINTON'S GOLD (97, Carson City)	N/A	33/15	0/0	0/0	(Orogrande, \$52,905)	\$390,204	162	10	1.08	0.81
9	READ THE FOOTNOTES (01, Smoke Glacken)	N/A	32/11	0/0	0/0	(Readtheciffnotes, \$62,212)	\$385,340	*355	19	1.22	1.11
10	DIABOLICAL (03, Artax), A & A Ranch	\$4,000	38/16	0/0	0/0	(Next Affair, \$49,375)	\$318,281	177	12	0.89	0.92
11	LAUGH TRACK (09, Distorted Humor)	N/A	41/12	0/0	0/0	(Ima Saint Too, \$49,096)	\$276,624	89	1	0.41	0.99
12	MARKING (12, Bernardini), A & A Ranch	\$3,500	14/4	1/1	1/1	(Delbert Too, \$122,535)	\$238,996	30	1	0.87	1.15
13	RIGHT RIGGER (06, Unbridled's Song), Hunter Creek Farms	\$3,500	9/4	0/0	0/0	(Rig Time, \$170,000)	\$201,362	25	4	1.48	0.52
14	FUSAICHI ZENON (JPN) (97, Sunday Silence)	N/A	18/12	0/0	0/0	(Strawberry Whisky, \$40,520)	\$182,635	125	4	0.62	0.80
15	MR. GOLD MOVER (08, Mr. Greeley), Bar Y Equine	\$1,500	23/8	0/0	0/0	(Peggy B Fast, \$30,373)	\$171,145	70	2	0.63	0.85

Blair have built Mighty Acres into one of the leaders in the entire Southwest.

Located near Pryor in the northeast corner of the Sooner State, Mighty Acres stands the top two active stallions in Oklahoma by 2020 progeny earnings—Flat Out and Liaison—and the farm is responsible for two of the top Oklahoma-breds of all-time, Kip Deville and Welder.

Center, a retired dentist, and Blair, a lifelong horseman, surely can credit good fortune for some of their success, but luck will only get you so far, and Center is quick to give accolades to Blair, longtime farm veterinarian Dr. Carl “Chell” Propp, and bloodstock agent Chad Schumer.

Even though Center and his team have made Mighty Acres synonymous with success in Oklahoma, the name was carried over from the farm's prior history, part of which includes Blair.

“The farm was originally built in the mid-1970s, and it was a Quarter Horse breeding farm,” Blair said about the now 265-acre facility. “The reason it's called Mighty Acres is that the original farm's claim to fame was a Quarter Horse stallion named Mighty Deck, so the owner named it Mighty Acres. I managed the farm from 1980 to 1984, and then in the early 1990s it was sold.”

After operating under new ownership for a while, it sat vacant for a few years



Blair and Center poring over sales catalogs at Keeneland

until Blair had a homecoming of sorts, with Center first leasing the property in late 2002 and then purchasing it a few years later around the time slot machines came to the state's tracks.

Center had never given much thought to owning a racehorse until about 25 years ago, and he figured it was probably a bad investment. Before long, however, it wasn't just the potential financial upside that got his attention but the adrenaline rush.

“I was on the board of directors at a bank, and one day the bank president

wanted to hurry up and finish the board meeting because he had a horse running that night,” Center recalled. “I kind of jokingly said to him, ‘I thought you were smarter than that; everyone knows you'll lose your shirt racing horses.’”

After hearing that the bank president was in the black for nine of 10 years when counting the tax benefits, Center got talked into giving it a try. The turning point came at Oaklawn Park, not far from his home and small farm in Springdale, Ark. He had a claimer running on Arkansas

2020 LEADING SIRES IN ARKANSAS



For daily updated sire lists
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Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB,Sire), Where Stands	2021 Stud Fee	Rnrs/ Wnrs	BT SWnrs/ Wns	Rstrct SW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	2020 Earnings	Cumulative			
								Foals	Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	COIL (08, Point Given), Charter Oak Farm	\$1,250	45/29	1/1	1/1	(Principe Carlo, \$121,780)	\$1,010,733	161	1	0.78	1.14
2	MARK VALESKI (09, Proud Citizen), Lake Hamilton Equine Center	\$1,500	37/16	1/1	1/1	(Network Effect, \$221,160)	\$840,915	71	2	1.04	1.19
3	HAMAZING DESTINY (06, Salt Lake), Starfish Stallions	\$1,500	19/12	0/0	0/0	(Hamazing Vision, \$101,768)	\$572,597	42	0	0.89	0.90
4	DOUBLE IRISH (11, Tapit), McDowell Farm	\$1,000	15/7	1/1	1/1	(Sekani, \$126,775)	\$423,520	33	1	1.15	1.07
5	EXHI (07, Maria's Mon), Big Oaks Farm	Private	29/13	0/0	0/0	(Golden Pearl, \$41,785)	\$295,763	91	1	0.61	1.17
6	PORTOBELLO ROAD (04, Storm Cat)	Died	22/13	0/0	0/0	(Souixper Charger, \$65,930)	\$283,128	150	1	0.71	0.88
7	CYBER SECRET (09, Broken Vow), Horseplay Racing	\$1,500	13/6	1/2	1/1	(Dont Tell Nobody, \$192,180)	\$282,718	35	1	0.99	0.82
8	LAURIE'S ROCKET (09, Bluegrass Cat), Witt Racing Stables	\$2,500	18/8	0/0	0/0	(Proud Victoria, \$62,850)	\$263,720	46	0	0.84	1.16
9	JONESBORO (02, Sefapiano), Lake Hamilton Equine Center	\$500	18/9	0/0	0/0	(Chicken Hawk, \$39,651)	\$243,874	89	3	0.78	0.74
10	BRAHMS (97, Danzig), Arkansas State University Equine Center	\$1,000	25/13	0/0	0/0	(Sir Brahms, \$44,020)	\$239,902	*700	13	1.03	1.11

Derby Day, and even though his horse didn't win, it lit the fuse for his passion for the sport.

"My horse was pretty far back and I thought he was out of it, and then a horse breaks out of the pack and people are screaming and then I realized that's my

things started small on their Arkansas farm, but then Center started thinking about buying a larger farm and a stallion for his fast-growing broodmare band.

Center's first stallion was Kipling, a son of Gulch who had the pedigree to be a top sire—he had sold for \$1.4 million as

with a big horse at some point. The trick, especially for a regional breeding operation, is to get those headline-making horses without breaking the bank.

Center, in the name of his Center Hills Farm, of which Mighty Acres is classified as a division, has bred not one but two millionaires in Oklahoma: Kip Deville and Welder. Kip Deville is one of just two Breeders' Cup winners from the state (Lady's Secret being the other), and multiple stakes winner Welder is a living legend at Oklahoma's two primary tracks, Remington Park in Oklahoma City and Will Rogers Downs in Claremore.

While Texas, Oklahoma's neighbor to the south, might boast of a richer Thoroughbred breeding heritage that produced 1946 Triple Crown winner Assault among other stars of yesteryear, the two millionaires bred by Center nearly match the Lone Star State's all-time total of three.

Kip Deville, a 2003 son of Kipling, stands at No. 1 among all Oklahoma-breds by earnings at \$3,325,489, eclipsing the long-standing record set by 1986 Horse of the Year Lady's Secret, a daughter of Secretariat foaled in 1982 (the same year pari-mutuel wagering was legalized in Oklahoma) who banked just north of \$3 million.

Moving between another farm in Oklahoma and Arkansas in his early years at stud before settling in at Mighty Acres, Kipling looked destined to stay in the region and seemed like a longshot to ever return to where he was bred, Kentucky. That is until Kip Deville hit full stride and won the 2007 NetJets Breeders' Cup Mile and finished second to Goldikova in the 2008 renewal.

Kip Deville was out of an Encino mare named Klondike Kaytie whom Center, again with Schumer's guidance, pur-



COURTESY MIGHTY ACRES

Kipling stood at Mighty Acres, and then Kentucky, and returned to Oklahoma in 2013

horse!" Center said. "There were thousands of people yelling and screaming for my horse, even if they were mostly cheering for their bets."

Center's horse didn't end up in the winner's circle that day, but "the adrenaline high was amazing," he said. "I played sports and that paid for most of my college education, so I've hit home runs to win big ballgames, but the high was not nearly as high as that one race."

Center soon upped his investment in racing in the late 1990s and expanded into breeding. His wife, Linda, a registered nurse, handled the foaling duties when

a yearling—out of Weekend Storm, a half sister to iconic stallion A.P. Indy, full sister to Preakness Stakes (G1) winner Summer Squall, and later the dam of TVG Breeders' Cup Mile (G1T) winner Court Vision. But Kipling had only modest racing success as an allowance runner, which allowed Center to acquire him while still in training with the advisement of Schumer.

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2020 LEADING SIRES IN OKLAHOMA

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Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB,Sire), Where Stands	2021 Stud Fee	Rnrs/ Wnrs	BT SWnrs/ Wns	Rstrct SW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	2020 Earnings	Foals	Cumulative		
									Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	FLAT OUT (06, Flatter), Mighty Acres	\$3,000	212/107	5/7	3/5	(Flat Out Speed, \$230,262)	\$4,484,328	407	9	1.08	1.15
2	SUCCESSFUL APPEAL (96, Valid Appeal)	Pnsd	98/50	0/0	0/0	(Jeannie's Beepbeep, \$133,088)	\$1,939,212	*832	56	1.61	1.40
3	LIAISON (09, Indian Charlie), Mighty Acres	\$2,500	151/61	1/1	0/1	(Bronx Beauty, \$150,850)	\$1,764,457	293	3	0.72	1.15
4	CALEB'S POSSE (08, Posse), River Oaks Farms	\$2,000	48/27	2/3	0/2	(Honor Way, \$271,500)	\$1,071,253	*118	3	1.12	1.12
5	WILBURN (08, Bernardini), River Oaks Farms	\$2,500	89/35	1/2	1/1	(Circus Rings, \$162,690)	\$1,057,594	*335	9	0.76	1.08
6	ATREIDES (11, Medaglia d'Oro), River Oaks Farms	\$2,000	62/36	1/1	1/1	(Lookin At Justice, \$82,078)	\$1,027,578	111	3	0.87	1.32
7	POLLARD'S VISION (01, Carson City)	Pnsd	62/20	1/1	1/1	(Visionary Ruler, \$88,069)	\$881,967	*783	21	1.14	1.15
8	EUROEARS (04, Langfuhr), WestWin Farms	\$1,500	61/26	1/1	1/1	(Three Chords, \$85,590)	\$840,089	175	5	0.82	0.82
9	SHAKIN IT UP (10, Midnight Lute), Caines Stallion Station	\$1,000	67/30	0/0	0/0	(Bray, \$92,525)	\$823,031	*142	1	0.69	1.08
10	ORATORY (02, Pulpit)	Died, 2016	26/15	1/2	1/1	(Redatory, \$135,878)	\$516,666	*226	7	1.09	1.11
11	MAGNA GRADUATE (02, Honor Grades), Brewster Ranch	\$2,500	39/16	1/2	1/1	(She's All Wolfe, \$185,094)	\$510,781	*250	9	0.91	0.99
12	LATENT HEAT (03, Maria's Mon), River Oaks Farms	\$2,000	36/17	1/1	1/1	(Northern Playboy, \$78,000)	\$485,639	*368	8	0.85	1.07
13	MR. NIGHTLINGER (04, Indian Charlie)	Died, 2017	41/16	0/0	0/0	(Do You Believe, \$48,341)	\$420,566	200	4	0.59	0.83
14	THE VISUALISER (03, Giant's Causeway), Kirten Farms	\$1,000	19/8	1/4	1/1	(Welder, \$230,649)	\$387,525	87	2	0.85	0.86
15	BACKSTABBER (06, Elusive Quality), M. Gerald Ball	\$1,000	12/5	1/2	1/1	(Quality Rocket, \$172,442)	\$307,763	19	1	0.93	0.40

chased for \$6,000. He was pleased to sell the gray foal for \$20,000 at the 2004 Fasig-Tipton Texas summer yearling sale at Lone Star Park.

"I thought we hit a home run," Center said with a laugh.

Blair remembers Kip Deville as being easy to care for because he was so laid back.

"You'd see him lying in the pasture, and you'd think he was dead," Blair recalled.

"He was always lying around. I guess he was saving his energy for the track."



FLAT OUT

Flatter – Cresta Lil, by Cresta Rider

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2020 LEADING SIRE IN LOUISIANA

For daily updated sire lists
visit BloodHorse.com

Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB,Sire), Where Stands	2021 Stud Fee	Rnrs/Wnrs	BT SWnrs/Wns	Rstrct SW/BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	2020 Earnings	Foals	Cumulative		
									Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	GEMOLOGIST (09, Tiznow), Acadiana Equine@Copper Crowne	\$4,000	213/105	3/4	1/3	(Horologist, \$345,334)	\$4,055,937	*717	14	1.09	1.28
2	COURT VISION (05, Gulch), Acadiana Equine@Copper Crowne	\$2,500	107/43	1/1	1/1	(Court Return, \$206,875)	\$2,095,639	*370	8	1.14	1.32
3	STAR GUITAR (05, Quiet American), Clear Creek Stud	\$7,500	87/48	1/1	1/1	(Guitar Tribute, \$96,360)	\$1,670,285	156	9	1.12	1.04
4	HALF OURS (03, Unbridled's Song), Clear Creek Stud	\$3,000	103/42	2/2	2/2	(Our Lost Love, \$157,183)	\$1,532,788	*521	23	0.93	1.09
5	CUSTOM FOR CARLOS (06, More Than Ready), Clear Creek Stud	\$2,500	118/40	1/2	1/1	(Monte Man, \$169,512)	\$1,416,203	276	6	0.77	1.03

Even though Center didn't turn a big profit selling the yearling, Kip Deville helped put Kipling and Mighty Acres on the map. His success also spurred a rarity with a regional stallion drawing interest to stand in Kentucky, rather than the other way around. After the Breeders' Cup exploits of Kip Deville, Center sold an interest in Kipling and the stallion stood at Crestwood Farm in Kentucky starting with the 2008 breeding season. Kipling returned to stand at Mighty Acres in 2013 and died in late 2019 at age 23. He's buried at the farm alongside his famous son, who was euthanized in 2010 after battling laminitis.

The other millionaire is Welder, a winner of 26 of 38 career starts with a bankroll of \$1,204,042 and counting. Unlike Kip Deville, who raced just twice in Oklahoma and traveled as far as Hong Kong and Dubai, Welder has churned out victory after victory at Remington Park (15 wins) and Will Rogers Downs (10 wins). A dominant sprinting force against fellow Oklahoma-breds and the reigning three-time Oklahoma Horse of the Year, the now 8-year-old gelding also has some impressive wins against open company, including a six-furlong track-record clocking of 1:08.13 in the \$159,900 David M. Vance Stakes in 2019 at Remington.

Welder is out of the Tiznow mare Dance Softly, a \$22,000 Keeneland November sale purchase by Schumer, and sired by former Mighty Acres stallion The Visualiser, a son of Giant's Causeway with a good but unspectacular race record.

Also a gray, Welder was purchased off the farm by newcomers to racing, trainer Teri Luneack and owner Clayton Rash's

Ra-Max Farms, as part of a package deal of yearlings, again for a modest price tag.

"He's a wonderful horse," Center said, adding that he usually sells his best foals and uses the proceeds to upgrade his broodmares. "And I love the breeders awards we get every time he wins."



COURTESY MIGHTY ACRES

Breeders' Cup Mile winner Kip Deville's marker at Mighty Acres

Lady luck perhaps played a bit more of a role in the success—and indeed the existence—of Welder compared to Kip Deville. The gelding is sort of a one-hit wonder for The Visualiser, whom Center bought as a stallion in part because of his color.

"My wife wanted to have a gray stallion, so one day I sent a message to Schumer that I need to have a gray stallion so I don't end up in a divorce," Center recalled with a chuckle. "He wasn't anything world-class as far as pedigree and nobody had ever heard of him, but he still worked out pretty well before we sold him."

HOPING TO GROW

When Center took ownership of Mighty Acres, it was the start of a new era for Oklahoma breeding and racing as slot machines

sent purses and breeders awards soaring. Despite new life for the industry with Oklahoma's purses doubling from about \$9 million in 2005 to more than \$18 million in 2006, the number of mares bred in Oklahoma was basically flat from 2005-10 and then started a slow but steady drop. From a purely numbers standpoint, that would be concerning; however, the state's breeding activity has held up better than Texas and mirrors the general decline in North America as a whole. It also seems to have leveled out a bit over the last few years, with the caveat that COVID-19 is likely to affect this breeding season's numbers.

"It's been surprising to me when you look at the purses at Remington and the breeders awards," Center said about the decline over the past decade.

"We still have less foals than we did years ago, so we need to figure out some way to turn that around, and that's why we are bringing in better stallions to upgrade the quality," Blair added. "Dr. Center has stepped up and grabbed a hold of some nice stallions and is trying to do the right thing to improve the breed in Oklahoma. We have some very good breeders and horsemen here."

Blair serves on the board of the Thoroughbred Racing Association of Oklahoma, which essentially operates as both the breed association and Horsemen's organization for the state. Center has tried to bring in fresh owners and breeders by partnering with newcomers to reduce their financial risk.

A STRONG TRIFECTA

Mighty Acres' current roster features a trio of stallions, all from deals brokered by

Special Note For Sire Lists:

For stallions that stand, will stand, or stood (deceased) in the selected region (stallions that have died or been exported prior to the 2015 breeding season are excluded), and have runners in North America. Listed below are all available Northern Hemisphere statistics through December 31, 2020. As supplied to *The Blood-Horse* by The Jockey Club Information Systems, Inc., earnings 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 2019 is \$25,300 or 53% of the 2019 average purse in Japan. To put earnings on par, all Japanese progeny earnings are multiplied by 53% before being credited to a sire's progeny earnings. Hong Kong earnings are adjusted by 17%; Singapore by 85%. Current year stakes winners include all N.H.-foaled black-type stakes winners worldwide. *Foal counts include Southern Hemisphere. Cumulative stakes winners include all countries. (A † indicates a sire represented by his first crop to race).

2020 LEADING SIRES IN TEXAS



For daily updated sire lists visit BloodHorse.com

Rank	Stallion (Foreign foaled), (YOB,Sire), Where Stands	2021 Stud Fee	Rnrs/Wnrs	BT SWnrs/Wns	Rstrct SW/ BT SW	(Chief Earner, Earnings)	2020 Earnings	Foals	Cumulative		
									Stks Wnrs	A-E Index	Comp Index
1	COMPETITIVE EDGE (12, Super Saver), Valor Farm	\$5,000	99/50	0/0	0/0	(Reagan's Edge, \$143,120)	\$2,320,256	*233	4	1.22	1.28
2	TOO MUCH BLING (03, Rubiano), Valor Farm	\$5,000	100/38	1/1	1/1	(Direct Dial, \$122,210)	\$1,449,077	312	28	1.00	1.02
3	MY GOLDEN SONG (03, Unbridled's Song), Valor Farm	\$4,000	49/27	1/1	0/1	(Sunlit Song, \$126,383)	\$936,675	175	15	0.92	1.00
4	AIKENITE (07, Yes It's True)	N/A	33/18	0/0	0/0	(Hotfoot, \$55,025)	\$546,266	68	0	0.89	1.15
5	REDEEMED (08, Include), Century Acres Farm	\$2,000	37/12	0/0	0/0	(Our Man Luke, \$102,413)	\$489,364	103	0	0.94	1.07
6	EARLY FLYER (98, Gilded Time), Valor Farm	\$2,000	33/10	2/2	2/2	(Wonders of Hislove, \$88,069)	\$389,376	317	19	0.73	0.88
7	CONGAREE (98, Arazzi)	Died, 2020	27/6	0/0	0/0	(Runningwscissors, \$116,698)	\$279,792	*413	13	1.17	1.33
8	MORO TAP (10, Tapit)	N/A	34/8	0/0	0/0	(Ruby Does Sparkle, \$40,405)	\$272,439	*75	1	0.55	0.82
9	GRASSHOPPER (04, Dixie Union)	N/A	23/8	0/0	0/0	(Great Affection, \$67,515)	\$234,737	144	3	0.69	0.86
10	LUNARPAL (02, Successful Appeal)	N/A	6/4	0/0	0/0	(Grizabella, \$111,225)	\$170,152	119	2	0.85	0.90

Schumer, headlined by three-time grade 1 winner and \$3.6-million earner Flat Out. The son of Flatter came to Mighty Acres for the 2020 breeding season, and his progeny earnings of nearly \$4.5 million last year easily topped any other stallion in the state. Those runners are from his time in Kentucky at Spendthrift Farm, but he'll have plenty of Oklahoma-breds hitting the track in the future as he bred 85 mares last year.

"We bred a few mares to Flat Out when he was at Spendthrift, and we were really happy with the foals we got," Blair said. "The breeders here were very supportive. I think when Kipling was big, we had about 70 mares to him, and I think 85 for Flat Out is the most ever for an Oklahoma stallion."

Liaison, a grade 1 winner by Indian Charlie, also came to Mighty Acres from Kentucky and arrived in 2019, so his first crop of Oklahoma-breds will hit the track next year. He took the top spot as the

state's most active stallion for the 2019 season, with 54 mares bred.

The farm's youngest stallion is Den's Legacy, a Medaglia d'Oro son who retired directly to Mighty Acres after earning nearly \$700,000 on the track. He made his mark as Oklahoma's top freshman sire last year with three winners, a stakes-placed runner and progeny earnings just short of \$130,000.

A WINNING PARTNERSHIP

With three top stallions and an unparalleled breeding record in the state, Center and Blair are still high on the Oklahoma-bred program, even with the current health pandemic adding another obstacle.

"I'm kind of the big picture guy, and I'll make decisions that might look crazy at first, like giving away a foal or doing something to help get someone into the business," Center said. "But Randy runs the

day-to-day operations. He's been in the horse business his whole life and he's so analytical. Every little detail is important to him, and he's very organized, which is good for me because I don't always pay attention to the nickels and the pennies.

"Randy and I have been true business partners in this," Center added. "We are both getting up in years a little, so we don't know how long we'll keep this big of an operation going."

Speaking like a breeder who knows the next superstar might be foaled this season or the result of one of this year's matings, Center added, "We talk about someday we hope someone else can come along and keep things going here, but that someday is not here yet." **BH**

Denis Blake is editor of The Horsemen's Journal and editor and publisher of American Racehorse magazines.

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