

Cynthia Culbertson

HISTORIAN, EDUCATOR,
ARTISTIC VISIONARY

The gifts Cynthia Culbertson generously shares with the Straight Egyptian Arabian community impact three vital areas: art, history and education. While those are her fields of expertise, Cynthia has brought so much more to Arabian horses, and those who admire them, all around the world.

Some might say she didn't have a choice. "I was born with the horse gene," Cynthia said. "I was 5 when I got my first pony. I always just loved horses. I would read all the horse magazines, and it was in *Western Horseman* that I first saw a photo of an Arabian. That was it." She never considered another breed.

Cynthia was in high school when she acquired her first part Arabian. As a teenager, she started training and showing, and soon began to improve her eye for equine beauty and conformation, culminating in a U.S. National Arabian Horse Judging Team Championship. Already enamored of the Egyptian Arabians she had seen, Cynthia took a year off from college to work with Judi Forbis at the renowned Ansata Arabian Stud. From that point on, she focused solely on those bloodlines in her own breeding program, for example, crossing a *Morafic son on mares of Ansata bloodlines. Once she returned to school, it only made sense to



complete her degree in Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, with an emphasis on Arabic.

An ever-growing appreciation for Egypt and its foundation Arabian breeding program, her love of history, and an intense longing for the desert, led Cynthia to a deep appreciation of the Middle East. "I came from the cornfields of Indiana, but the desert called to me," she said. These experiences would coalesce to shape her destiny.

The 1980s found Cynthia working for Lockheed-Martin and running a horse business in the Deep South, where she was active on the board and as vice president of the Georgia Arabian Horse Association. During the 1990s, Cynthia was employed by the U.S. Government and lived for several years in Saudi Arabia. While there, relationships strengthened with international friends and colleagues – all based on admiration for the Arabian and its place in art, history and modern day breeding programs.

While impressive, these activities were only a few of the stepping stones in Cynthia's lifelong career. Her specialized expertise, honed over 40-plus years, combined with formidable management and media skills, has led to a long list of successful projects – including the first international museum exhibition devoted to Arabian horses. Cynthia has been a respected keynote speaker, a prominent writer and editor, a consultant for museum, film and television projects, and so much more.

Cynthia's contributions specifically to the Pyramid Society are boundless. Her donations of time and expertise on countless media and PR projects through the years have shaped its impressive public image. One extraordinary endeavor involved the organization and cataloging of the generous Marshall donation, which led to work on the resulting auctions, film tribute and book, *Gleannloch Farms, the Legend and the Legacy*. It was the largest fundraiser ever for the Pyramid Society. Another unforgettable endeavor was a multi-media arena finale and live

action tableaux, presented at the Egyptian Event, for which Cynthia developed the concept, wrote the script, and oversaw a production that included live horses, music, and more.

Her books and articles about Egyptian Arabians in particular include, but are not limited to, *Ansata Hejazi, Born to Rule; The Arabian Horse of Egypt; Pyramid Society Handbook 2010; A Gift from the Desert: the Art, Culture and History of the Arabian Horse; and the Desert Legacy series.*

Cynthia joined the Pyramid Foundation Board in 2000 and became a member of the Pyramid Society Board in 2012, eventually serving as Secretary and Member of the Executive Board. Cynthia then served as the group's Executive Director, and is currently Vice President of the Pyramid Society Foundation.

"I am truly grateful and honored to receive the Trustee Award, but also humbled to join the incredible people already on the list," Cynthia said. "And then to receive it at the same time as my good friend Karen Kasper is very special. She and I have done so many projects together over the years and all over the world. It's quite amazing."

The Board of Trustees is honored to present the 2023 Trustees Award to Cynthia Culbertson for her steadfast support and generous contributions to the Pyramid Society and its members, and for her exceptional educational and creative promotional efforts to sustain and increase interest and appreciation for Straight Egyptian Arabians around the world.