

## 2003 Mother of the Year – Barb Folkestad

Riding horses has been one of the best experiences in my life. Each moment I spend with horses, I feel true joy and happiness that cannot be explained. To me this sport is priceless, but for my family it is no MasterCard commercial. The expense of riding has been the most daunting factor for my family. The one single thing that keeps my career going is my mother.

I do not know any other person who has gone through as much as my mom just so their child can ride. For some families it's not a big deal to pay the monthly bills, but for my family it's huge. My mom gave up most of what she wanted for herself just so I could ride. Even through times of turmoil my mom manages to make things always work out and support me in every way possible. The problems that exist are only hurdles for my mom, never walls, as she manages to live every single day of her life thinking positively with a smile on her face. In every family there are the good times and there are the bad times. The people that we love and cherish the most are able to live both times and never think of the tragedies, but rather think of the goodness which comes from every crisis life throws our way. This past year my mother and I have become closer than ever before. It has not been a joyous time, in fact, it's probably been one of the worst years of my life; however, I will always remember something my mother told me, "Life's not always bad, and everything works out for the best, as long as you have faith." After I heard my mom say these words, I knew for a fact she was right. I also knew that she had the most faith of anyone I know. The best part was that she had faith in me. I could surpass my goals because my mom was always going to be there for me and support me through thick and thin.

My mom understands how much horses mean to me and how it makes me feel when I have the opportunity to ride. At the horse shows, she enjoys watching me ride, even if it is just a flat class. When I walk out of the ring, I sometimes look over to where my mom is watching. She wears a brilliant smile that tells me how truly proud she is, even if I chipped. Through my mother I can see all the hard work that she has put into making it possible for me to ride, and I know that she gains just as much, if not more, as I do. When times are hard and we are forced to give up a horse, I can see the pain in my mother's eyes. I tell her it's all right and that I still have Othello, which is more than enough. She knows I am thankful for every horse I am able to sit upon, but the thought of having a horse taken away from me hurts her. She only wants the best for me, and I could never ask any more from her because there is no more. She has given it all, and she always will.

Every year I watch everything around me change. The one thing that never changes is my mom's love for me. My mother has so badly wanted me to have the World that she has given me the Universe. To show my mom how much she means in my life and give back the love she has given me I nominate my mother, Barb Folkestad, for the 2003 Oregon Hunter/Jumper Association Mother of the Year Award.

Jill Folkestad