

A Tribute To

# Sam Savitt



Sam and Bette Savitt.

By Werner Rentsch

**S**am Savitt, one of America's favorite equine artists, died on Christmas Day, 2000 after a long illness. He was 83. Sam was one of the 10 founding members of the American Academy of Equine Art and one of its most popular instructors, teaching workshops at the Kentucky Horse Park, the Appleton Museum of Art in Ocala, Fla., and the Bruce Museum in Greenwich, Conn. Sam also regularly taught workshops in Scottsdale, Ariz.

Sam exhibited with the AAEA for 20 years and will long be remembered for his keen eye for drawing and equine anatomy. Sam was a stickler for correct anatomy and that made him a vocal and positive force on juries that selected

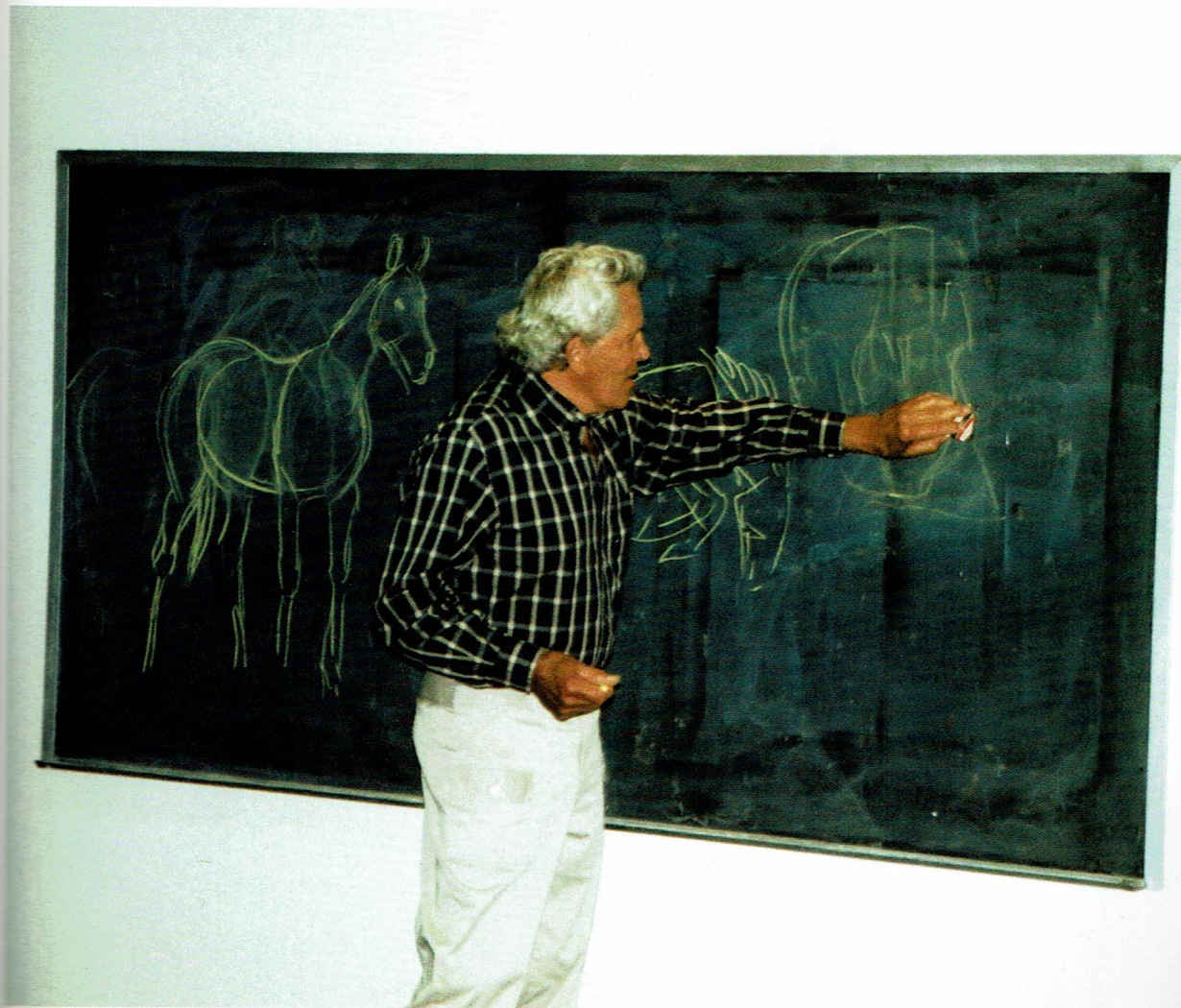
works for academy exhibitions. He was also a longtime member of the Society of Animal Artists and served on its executive board.

Sam was born and raised in Wilkes-Barre, Penn., studied illustration at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, N.Y., graduating in 1941, and studied painting at the Art Students League in New York City. He served in the Army during World War II as a first lieutenant and went on to become a world-famous illustrator. Sam and his wife, Bette, moved to North Salem, N.Y., in 1956.

In 1986 he said, "I am a creative person and I found that painting pictures did not completely satisfy this creative urge. I turned to writing as an extension of what I felt."

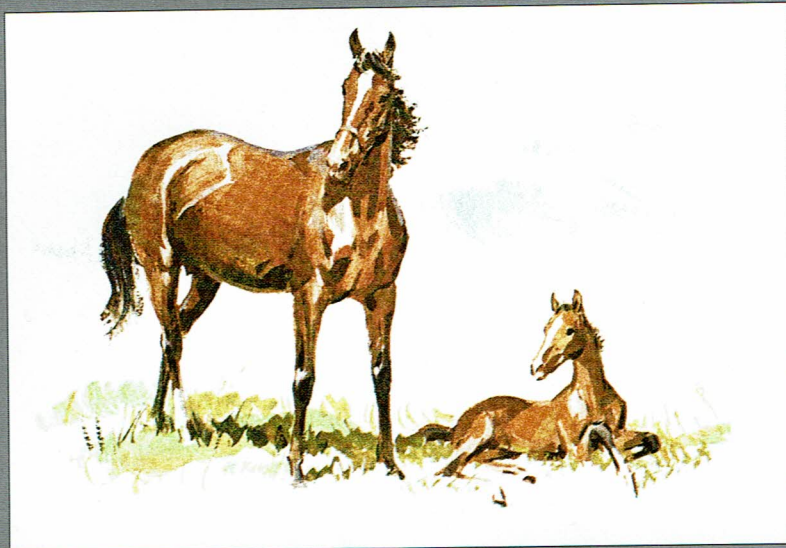
He wrote and illustrated 15 books, and his drawings and paintings appeared in more than 150 other books. His paintings of Roy Roger's Trigger, Gene Autry's Champion, and the Lone Ranger's Silver appeared on the cover of comic books

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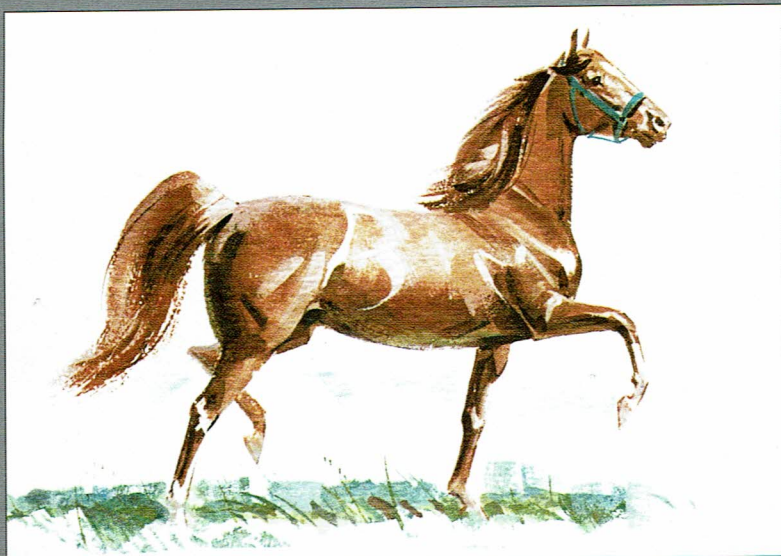


Savitt, one of the American Academy of Art's most popular instructors, was a stickler for correct equine anatomy.

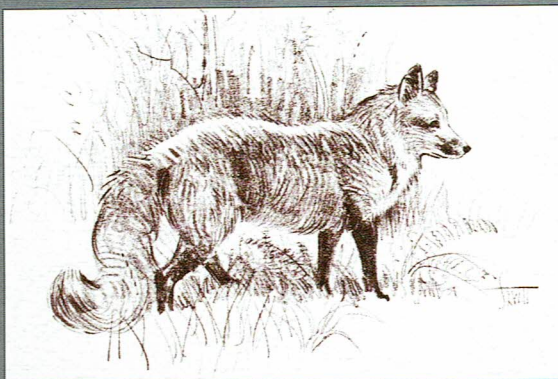
# Sam Savitt



Bay Mare & Foal, notecard, published by Black Horse Press.



Saddlebred, notecard, published by Black Horse Press.



Standing Fox,  
notecard,  
published by  
Black Horse  
Press.

and his well-known posters of equine breeds and horse anatomy hang on the walls of generations of equine artists and horse lovers.

His early professional years were spent as a freelance illustrator, but his first love was always horses. His two greatest heroes were Paul Brown, one of America's most respected equine artists, and the legendary show jumping trainer Gordon Wright. Sam became a disciple of Brown, who taught him how to draw horses correctly, and Wright, who taught him riding.

It was through Wright that Sam's now-classic book *Draw Horses With Sam Savitt* came to be written. Wright had gone to Viking Press looking to do a new edition of his book on the United States Equestrian Team, which Sam had illustrated. Viking editor Barbara Burn recalls asking Sam if he could help her with a personal problem. Since childhood she could only draw horses facing left, but could never draw them going the other direction. Sam admitted he had a similar problem and asked for a piece of tracing paper. He then taught her how to adjust a left-facing horse into a right-facing one. She asked him if he had other similar tips and out of that grew his *Draw Horses With Sam Savitt*, which is now with its fourth publisher and is still going strong.

Sam's reputation as a horse artist continued to grow and he began illustrating books on polo, racing, show jumping, rodeo, and other equine disciplines. His drawings appeared in *Sports Illustrated*, *Equus*, and other magazines, including the *Chronicle of the Horse*, for which he did 31 covers. He was named the official artist for the United States Equestrian Team and illustrated the book *Great Horses of the USET*. In 1956 he won the Boy's Club of America junior book award for his book, *Midnight, Champion Bucking Horse*. He received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the North American Horsemen's Association in 1998, which also honored him as an Equine Artist of Distinction.

I will always remember Sam from a



Forever Wild by Sam Savitt, oil

# Sam Savitt



Teamwork by Sam Savitt



OLD SALEM FARM  
presents  
The Third Annual  
**AMERICAN  
CANCER  
SOCIETY**  
Horse Show

Sam Savitt

Cover art for horse show program.

week we spent sharing a house at the beautiful Silverleaf Farm in Ocala. We were both in Ocala teaching workshops for the AAEE. We would always get up early and walk around the farm and look at horses. This was a wonderfully peaceful time to discuss the students and how we could help them understand the principles of equine art.

Having the opportunity to spend a week discussing art with Sam Savitt will forever be a cherished experience for me. It was always fun being around him and listening to his colorful stories. He was a real celebrity; wherever we went people would recognize him and ask for his autograph. He loved to talk to young artists and was always supportive and quick to show them some tip on how to improve their drawing of the horse.

Sam is survived by wife, Bette, daughter Vicki, son Roger, brother Alfred, and sister Sally. There will be a celebration of Sam's life in Old Salem, N.Y., on April 22, 2001. ♦

(Werner Rentsch is president of the American Academy of Equine Art and was a close friend of Sam Savitt.)