

Noted Horse Artist, Sam Savitt of North Salem, Dies

Noted horse artist and equestrian Sam Savitt of North Salem died Dec. 25. He was 83.

During a freelance career that spanned more than 50 years, Mr. Savitt turned a love of horses into an understanding of how to capture them on canvas with media that included watercolor, charcoal, ink, oil and pencil. His talent brought exuberance and authenticity to his subject, regardless of the activity - horse racing, polo, steeplechasing, fox hunting, rodeo and show jumping.

He grew up in Wilkes-Barre, Pa., and from early childhood had an avid wish to become a horse artist even though his family lived in an urban area and had no horse connections.

"Horses were something that I always loved," he said in an article that appeared in *The Patent Trader* in 1985. "As far as I can remember I had this thing about horses. There's something about the look, the feel. I don't know, but for me, nothing compares."

After graduating from the Pratt Institute in New York City. He served in the U.S. Army in the Asia/Pacific Theater throughout World War II, attaining the rank of 1st lieutenant. He later studied at the Art Students League and the New School.

His first book, "A Foal's First Day," was published in 1957.

Mr. Savitt illustrated 150 books and his drawings were published in magazines such as *Sports Illustrated*, *Equus*, *Country Journal*, *Boy's Life* and *Practical Horseman*. Among other assignments, he was hired to create posters for the National Horse Show and the Kentucky Derby; paintings for limited-edition reproduction and art for advertising campaigns. He was commissioned to do many portraits as well.

His Sam Savitt Horse Charts, with concise and illustrated information on horses, have been sold all over the world. The first of these charts, "Sam Savitt's Guide to Horses," is in the collection of the Smithsonian Institution. With his wife, Bette, he opened Black Horse Press in 1963, which marketed the charts and other items he produced. Black Horse Press was sold last fall.

Mr. Savitt was the author of 15 books, with topics ranging from

short stories to drawing instruction. In addition, he gave workshops on art and was a public speaker whose ability to sketch horses while he spoke made him a favorite with audiences of all ages. In the 1960s, he made appearances on two children's television shows, "Wonderama" and "Around the Corner."

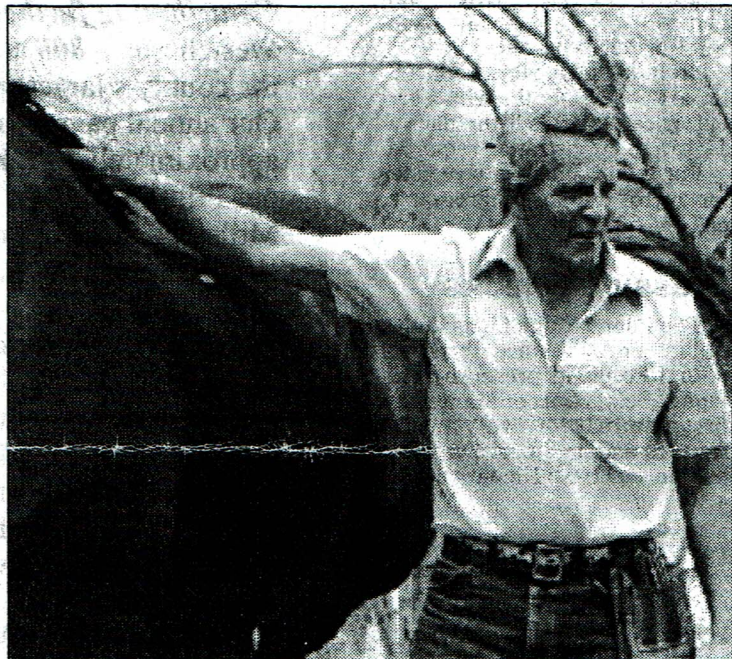
Mr. Savitt was designated the official artist of the United States Equestrian Team and was honored last year by *Equus* as one of the world's most influential horsemen of the 20th century. In 1998, he was presented a Lifetime Achievement Award by the North American Horsemen's Association, the only time this award has ever gone to an artist. He was also featured in many reference books including "Who's Who in American Art," "Who's Who in the East," "Men of Achievement," "International Authors and Writers" and "American Artists of Renown."

After living in New York City, Levittown and Yorktown Heights, Mr. Savitt moved in 1956 to North Salem, where he owned horses and became an accomplished horseback rider. His constant and intimate relationship with horses helped train him to create the vitality and attention to detail that were characteristic of his work. "I know horses," he said in a recent magazine interview, "and I just sort of reconstruct them on canvas."

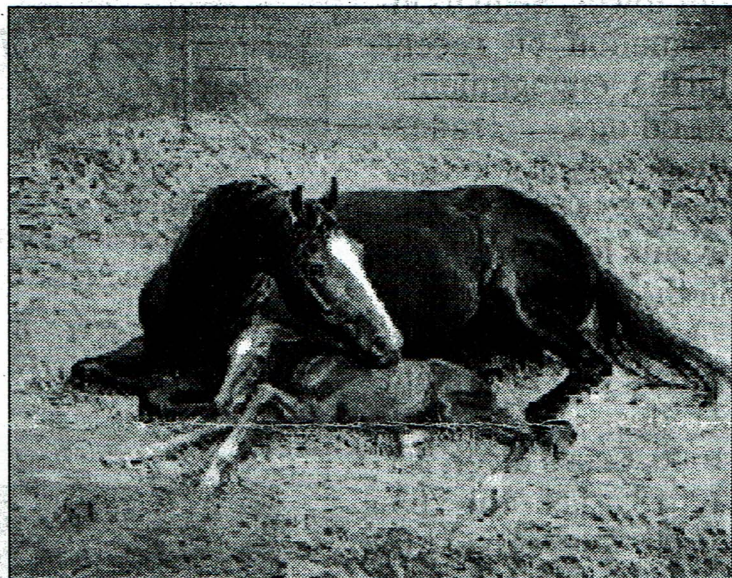
In addition to his wife, whom he married in 1946, he is survived by two children, Vicki Savitt of Berkeley, Calif., and Roger of Bedford; a brother, Al of New York City; and a sister, Sally Ross of Tamarac, Fla.

A memorial service will be held at a later date.

Memorial donations may be sent to the North Salem Free Library, Route 116, North Salem, NY 10560; or the North Salem Open Lands Foundation.



Photographs courtesy of Black Horse Press
Artist Sam Savitt of North Salem, above, illustrates a point for students during a horse-drawing class. "Mother's Love," below, showing a mare and its foal, is one of the artist's works.



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