



United Professional Horsemen's Association, Inc.

INUPHA INDUCTS MARIO DELOYA INTO THE UPHA CARETAKER HALL OF FAME Presented at the 2026 Blue Ridge Classic Horse Show

The UPHA Jesus Gonzales Gomez Caretaker Hall of Fame honors individuals whose dedication to the care of horses has left a lasting impact on our industry. Last night, we recognized a man who has faithfully served both horses and the people who love them.

For more than three decades, Mario Deloya has been an indispensable part of Boones Farm and Stables in Concord, North Carolina. Through snowstorms, hurricanes, a pandemic, and every challenge in between, he has been a constant—caring for horses, supporting riders, mentoring young caretakers, and helping build one of the industry's most respected programs.

Over the years, he has traveled countless miles, working through blistering summer heat, bitter winter cold, and everything in between. He has cared for horses through illness and injury with a steady, reassuring presence. Living on the farm, he is often the first to check on a sick horse in the middle of the night when help is needed.

It's no surprise, then, that Paul Boone describes Mario as his "right-hand man," a trusted colleague and member of the Boone family. In Paul's words, "We are truly blessed by his commitment and friendship."

Mario's calm, methodical approach inspires confidence in every horse he handles. Even the most high-strung horses settle in his hands. From the early days of CH Moonchance to his retirement ceremony, Mario's quiet confidence helped that remarkable horse shine throughout his career. That same steady presence has calmed countless riders and earned the trust of every horse in his care.

The impact of Mario's quiet dedication can be measured in many ways—but the accomplishments are certainly impressive. Over the years, he has cared for multiple World's Champions, including CH Callaway's Criterion, CH Hank Heiron, Winstar Stinger, CH (SA) Carlswald Prince's Dominoe, Westgate Villain, CH Tefnut, CH Heir Style (BHF), CH Lady Mandolin, CH Amarula Sunrise, Charlotte's Web, and many more. Mario's compassion extends well beyond the show ring. He gives horses nicknames, teaches them Spanish, and has a special affection for every animal on the farm—from the dogs and barn cats to a miniature horse named Buffy.

His quiet encouragement has also meant the world to countless riders. After a difficult ride, while emotions are still raw, Mario is often the one standing at the in-gate, offering a few simple words: "It's okay. Another day. He's a good horse." Mario is also a teacher. He takes great pride in helping young caretakers learn not only how to do the job, but how to do it the right way. As Paul Boone often says, the best education anyone can receive about horse care comes from spending time with Mario. His knowledge, experience, and unwavering commitment have helped preserve what is simply known around the farm as "the Boones Way."



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Betsy Boone describes Mario this way: "If I could choose only three words, they would be dedicated, trustworthy, and loyal." She adds, "He never complains. He just quietly gets the job done and always follows through." As Betsy says, "Mario's word goes," and his stability has become "a rock at Boones Farm."

Ironically, Mario would probably rather not be recognized. He has never sought the spotlight. It is because of that humility, his unwavering work ethic, and the difference he has made in the lives of horses and people alike that we are so proud to recognize him tonight.

Please join UPHA in congratulating the 2026 UPHA Jesus Gonzales Gomez Caretaker Hall of Fame inductee, Mario Deloya.