



THE CULVER EQUESTRIENNES

First known as the Culver Horsewoman's Club, aka "The Culver Equestrienne Hunt," the organization was founded in 1978 by Director of Horsemanship Lt. Col. Floyd W. Townsley (1968-79). At that time, the team was formed to familiarize girls with hunt field customs.

In 1980 the Equestriennes became a choreographed mounted drill ride that performs to musical accompaniment. Superintendent John R. Mars (1976-82) encouraged Director of Horsemanship Maj. R. Jeffrey Honzik (1980-88) to develop a girls' riding squad similar to the Lancer Platoon. In 1981 the Equestriennes became Culver Girls Academy's first honor organization. To be eligible for membership in the Equestriennes a girl must be enrolled in an Equine Science class, have earned her CGA Crest, carry at least a 2.40-grade-point average, and maintain citizenship eligibility.

The Equestriennes made their public debut at the 1981 Culver Polo Benefit held at the Chicago Armory. The Equestriennes returned to perform at the Chicago Armory in 1981 and 1982, the Chicago Rosemont Horizon in 1983, and at Culver polo benefits from 1984 to '87.

Additionally, the Equestriennes have performed with the Lancer Platoon at the opening ceremonies of the American Quarter Horse Congress in Columbus, Ohio, in October 1992 and the ProMusica, also in Columbus, in May 1999. The Equestriennes took second place at the Midwest Horse Fair Drill Team Competition (Madison, Wis.) in 1999 and 2000 and placed third in 2001.

In 1994 the Equestriennes and other Academies honor organizations appeared in the Indianapolis 500 Festival Parade. The Equestriennes and the Lancer Platoon were re-invited to the 500 Festival Parade in May 2002. The Equestriennes have since ridden in the 2006, 2007, and 2009 Indianapolis parade.

In May 2008 a contingent of the Equestriennes and Lancers rode in the Kentucky Derby Pegasus Parade in Louisville, Kentucky.

The Equestriennes have also appeared in parades throughout the area and the Midwest, among them the:

Blossomtime Festival Parade (Benton Harbor, Mich.)

Potawatomi Festival Parade (Attica, Ind.)

Monon Christmas Parade (Monon, Ind.)

Monticello Christmas Parade (Monticello, Ind.)

The Equestriennes made history in 1985 when the CGA riders were invited to join the Black Horse Troop in President Reagan's Presidential Inaugural Parade. Unfortunately, the 1985 parade was canceled due to sub-zero weather conditions. That year all parade participants joined President Reagan at the Capital Center in Landover, Md., for an inaugural celebration.

However, the Equestriennes returned to Washington, D.C., in 1989 and paraded down Pennsylvania Avenue with the Black Horse Troop. Culver was not invited to the 1993 parade, but the Equestriennes and Black Horse Troop have since ridden in the 1997, 2001, 2005, 2009 and 2013 inaugural parades.

In September 2010, 20 Equestriennes and 20 members of the Black Horse Troop rode in the opening ceremonies of the Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games in Lexington, Ky., before 25,000 spectators. It was the first time the WEG had been held in the United States. The Culver riders first carried 40 U.S. flags and later in the ceremony carried FEI flags. The Equestriennes and Lancer Platoon each performed individual rides the following day in the World Equestrian Games' Equine Village.

In December 2013, the Equestriennes competed in the 2013 "Bluegrass Blast" Drill Team Competition at the Kentucky Horse Park, Lexington, KY. The Equestriennes received a 2nd place in the Youth Themed Division and a 5th place in Open Youth Freestyle.

The logo and distinctive pin worn by the Equestriennes were designed and created by the late Sarah Brown Pascale '83, a charter member of the Equestriennes. M. Lynn Rasch '76 was the head coach of the Equestriennes from 1993-2014 and also served as head coach from 1981-1986. Savannah Kranich '05 served as assistant coach from 2009-2014 and Grace McKay served as the associate coach since 2012-2014. Savannah Kranich assumed the role of head Equestriennes Coach in the fall of 2014 to present day and Grace McKay assumed the role of assistant Equestriennes coach in the fall of 2014.

—Information provided by M. Lynn Rasch