

## Life of a Jockey

You must have heard of the saying that the apple doesn't fall far from the tree which might not be true in many cases but in my case it is as true as it can be as I shared many similarities with my father including but not limited to my name. My father was a race jockey from Louisiana; he mainly rode quarter horses. Very much like myself he had followed the footsteps of his father, Vincent Patio, who came out to California to work on racetracks.

My father also moved to California as a child, and worked as jockey at a racetrack as well. Following the World War II relief efforts, Day Medals opened up under William P. Kind. They had professional and quarter horse races. My father was always one of the leading jockeys and was very popular and well-liked among the people. He had started riding in 1950s and continued to do so till 1975. After that, he became a jockey agent and continued working at racetracks till his death in 2004.

My family wasn't very big apart from me my parents only had two other children my sisters. I remember going to the race track with my father in the morning which is among the fondest memories of early childhood. It is from there that I got my love for horses. I enjoyed watching them run as fast as the wind as if they could fly, they were free spirited animals who were loyal to their riders.

I loved the rush you feel when you are racing through the track, the wind blowing through your hair making you feel excited yet at peace. But alas the happiness of childhood can only last so long as we step into adulthood we start seeing the bitter parts of the world that obscure the innocence and happiness of childhood.

In my life the cause of this bitterness was my parents divorce. After my parents separated my dad was not present most of the time, however, I kept in touch with him as much as I could but even then I could not deny the fact that things will never be same again.

But to dim the bitterness of life is one of the main reasons that we keep souvenirs that remind us of the peasant days. One of these souvenirs was what we call the "win" pictures at home. These were the pictures taken when the horse wins the race, There are many pictures like these of my dad on our mantel.

Along with these souvenirs there is also the fact that even though there is bitterness in the world that doesn't mean that happiness doesn't exist anymore. We do still have moments of happiness when we are with the ones we love. For example when I was in Northern California, my father and I would visit the horse fairs that were up in Northern California at that time and I would once again feel the happiness that I felt as a child while spending time with my father. I have the same name as my father so people often used to confuse the two of us which was fine by me.

I have always been close to animals especially horses, even though from when I was a young boy—3 years old—the first time my dad tried to put me on a horse, I screamed and hollered. But now I love them, after spending so much time with them. And, although I wasn't raised on a farm, I have always loved farm animals. I have always worked in the racetracks, taking care of the horses and similar animals. So, I grew up to like farm animals a lot. I have always gone to stables, as a kid. I grew up riding, so I was pretty good at that, too.

Talking about education In 1975, I graduated from high school and then went to University of California, U.C. Davis, where I studied Agriculture and was a pre-vet there. While there, I lived on a ranch called the Hillcrest Stock Farm. I was able to get a job through a veterinarian that I worked under, Dr. John Hughes, at U.C. Davis. I, then, completed my last three years of college. I have always

wanted to be a vet so I went to a veterinary school at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia—in 1979 and graduated from there in 1983—upon graduating from U.C. Davis. Following that, I went to Gainesville, Florida and worked as an intern in Large Animal Medicine and Surgery at the University of Florida, in College of Veterinary Medicine and also did

a residency in Large Animal Surgery there. Later, I decided to start practicing Veterinary on my own and started veterinary practice in Gainesville and Ocala in Florida. I stayed there for about three years and returned to California in 1991 and started my own veterinary practice on the racetrack. \*a list of few places\*. I have always worked for myself and never under others. Currently, I serve as the official veterinarian for the California Horse Racing Board and have been doing that for about five years now. So technically, I have always been a horse doctor.

Now talking about my family I have 4 children – Eric aged 30 years, Julian – 24 years, Charlotte – 14 years and Anita is 9 years. As for how I met my wife In 2005, I became one of the faculty members at the Western University of Health Sciences in Pomona, California. I was a facilitating assistant veterinarian at a new veterinary school and that's where I met my wife, Victoria Impact, who is the mother of my last two children. She is also a veterinarian and a really honourable woman.

As for my career and experience in the field In 2008, I went to Saudi Arabia where I stayed with His Highness Prince Sultan Al Kabeer. I was there as the racing stable veterinarian for the Nofa Equestrian Resort from 2008 until 2010. We won the World Cup in Dubai with a horse named "Big City Man in 2009. Upon returning back to California, in 2010, I resumed my veterinary practice in Del Mar and Highwood Park in July. Since then, I have been working here, in California, at the California Horse Racing Board where I examine horses, do drug testing and supervise other veterinarians.

Coming to how I know Mr Forrest well I met Mr. Forrest in 1971, when we were young and he came to Day Medals. His fatherly used to work in the tracks, as well, along with his uncle, Ernest Forrest, who was a trainer. We've been great friends ever since.

We went to the fairs together in 1974. He's been a great friend to me even in superiority. We both were quite sober but he was also instrumental in me being sober. Not only have we been friends for a long time, but both our families have been friends for a few generations now. We have always been really close, just like our fathers. We used to—and still—do many things together and always keep in touch. Back then, we were both learning to be a jockey so we used to ride together.

As for my love of horses and other animals it had stayed the same if not grown more over the time but although I have owned quite a few horses in the past, I don't own any now. My family and I do go out to ride though and we enjoy our time.