

# Farewell Debie, We Will Miss You



*From the Executive Corner*

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by DOUG BURGE & RUDI GROOTHEDDE

This opening column, From the Executive Corner, is usually reserved for outlining and informing both the CTBA membership and *California Thoroughbred's* subscribers of the racing, breeding, and legislative issues that affect this association and the industry. This month, we would like to use this page as a tribute to the memory of Debra Ginsburg, the longstanding and loyal employee of this publication who passed away on June 30.

Many of you have enjoyed Debie's insightful, informative, and even heart touching stories over the past 20 years, and it is only fitting that we dedicate the opening page to her memory. Rudi Groothedde, the Managing Editor of the magazine, provides the following remembrances of our great friend and associate. She will be missed.—*Doug Burge*

I used to think that the hardest part about writing an editorial was getting my creative juices going in time to meet the deadline. However, with the passing of Debie Ginsburg, I now know that getting the story right about my subject matter is a more difficult, and important, task.

How does one write a dedication to someone who is very close to you one moment and then gone the next? It's hard. However, I will now try and tell you about the wonderful person that Debie was, in the best way possible—through her eyes.

Nothing was ever too much trouble for Debie. That's because she loved so many things in life, resulting in a lot of love coming back her own way. Like her cats—Agatha, Katie Cat and Yoda—for example. Many times Debie explained to me how attached they were to her and that whenever she was doing some reading, which she did an amazing amount of, or planning to go away on a trip, those feline friends made it almost impossible for her to complete the task at hand.

Debie was also respected and loved by all the people she knew during her life. Her work with our monthly CTBA Member Profiles will endure for years to come as a testament to both her talent and dedication. She received many a heartfelt “thank you” for these pieces along with many of her other editorials, including the award-winning ones. I had the honor of accepting one of these awards on her behalf less than a week before her passing.

Our magazine is about horses and that is how Debie came to be with us. She loved these majestic animals and parlayed a passion for them, combined with a gift subscription from her grandparents, into securing her “dream job” at *California Thoroughbred*. I was fortunate enough to attend her funeral in Fresno, the city of her birth and death, and there wasn't a dry eye in the Chapel of Light as—one by one—her family and friends told their own special story about Debie and all the dreams she had realized.

One of my favorite moments with Debie was when she

walked into my office just days after the 2004 Preakness Stakes, and boldly proclaimed that she was going to New York to experience, first-hand, Smarty Jones' attempt to capture the elusive Triple Crown. Only a few weeks earlier, I had helped Debie put together her first ever trip to the Kentucky Derby and now here she was, ready to meet this new journey all on her own. I was so proud of her independence.

Needless to say, Debie had a most wonderful time both at the Belmont Stakes and with her cousins on the East Coast and came back to the office, as usual, with a ton of great stories about her latest adventure. They were on a par with her infamous “terrorist tale” about having to surrender her Derby souvenir pins when previously singled out by the security people at the Louisville airport in Kentucky.

The Triple Crown reminds me of Debie's love for horses and especially her “special” ones, such as Native Diver, Secretariat, Ruffian, Affirmed, Fran's Valentine, Fastaspednbulit, Tiznow and many, many more. That's essentially what she was all about, talking and writing about these equine athletes, as well as her favorite people, places and things like Christopher Reeve, Laffit Pincay Jr., Ken Jennings, the Hotel del Coronado, Breyer horses, book clubs, fiction contests, etc.

We called Debie “The CTBA Encyclopedia” because of all the historical information she absorbed and retained over the years. My enduring memory of her, though, is one of a writer who possessed both a boundless knowledge and genuine passion for “The Sport of Kings.”

I feel honored to have known you for over six years, Debie, so God Bless and rest in peace.—*Rudi Groothedde*

PS—Readers may wish to follow the fortunes of a certain two-year-old filly by Delaware Township, out of Thunder Runner. That's because her owner, Bob Feld's Bongo Racing Stable, recently renamed her Debie Ginsburg! 🐾



*The late Debie Ginsburg receiving her momentos for 20 years of service—through October 2005—from California Thoroughbred Managing Editor Rudi Groothedde (left) and CTBA Executive Vice President and General Manager Doug Burge (right) earlier this year.*