

# SANTA GERTRUDIS BREEDERS INTERNATIONAL



Post Office Box 1257 | Kingsville, Texas 78364  
(o) 361.592.9357 | (f) 361.592.8572  
[www.santagertrudis.com](http://www.santagertrudis.com)

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## **SGBI Honors Hall of Fame Inductees**

*Case, Rodgers and Ruiz Recognized for their contributions to the association and Santa Gertrudis breed*

**KINGSVILLE, Texas** – Santa Gertrudis Breeders International (SGBI) hosted its 2022 Annual Meeting April 7-10 in Lexington, Ky. Honoring the SGBI Hall of Fame inductees is always a highlight of the annual event. This year's inductees, who were recognized for their contributions to SGBI and the Santa Gertrudis breed, were Hoover Case, Dr. Porter Rodgers and Diana Ruiz.

### ***Hoover Case***

For 30-plus years, Hoover Case of Marshfield, Mo., has been the voice on the block for the Santa Gertrudis breed. His distinctive chant, pleasant personality and occasional admonishments to the ol' boys who come up one bid short have made him a favorite with Santa Gertrudis breeders from coast to coast.

Case has dedicated most of his life to auctioneering purebred cattle. His father, Willis Case, founded the Case Auction Company in 1939. Willis' knowledge of farm real estate along with his farm equipment and livestock knowledge helped establish Case Auction Company as the farm real estate specialists in southern Missouri. However, it was in 1966 when 16-year-old Case stepped into the sale ring with his Charolais heifer at the American Royal Charolais Sale that he knew he wanted a career as an auctioneer; but not just an auctioneer, he wanted to be a purebred livestock auctioneer.

Following graduation from Missouri State University in 1970, Case joined his father as a partner in Case Auction Company, launching the purebred livestock sales division. Over the years, Case Auction Services evolved into a nationally recognized company, providing marketing, auctioneering and sale management services for purebred livestock operations across the United States.

A life-threatening bout with bacterial meningitis in 1993 left Case paralyzed, but it did not dampen his desire to market seedstock, especially purebred Santa Gertrudis cattle. Case became heavily involved with the breed, selling high-profile events including the King Ranch 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Sale, Briggs Ranches sales and the Alabama Connection Sale. He has sold Santa Gertrudis sales, big and small, working to get the most for the seller, all the while making sure each bidder had an equal opportunity to purchase the animal of their choice.

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In addition to marketing Santa Gertrudis cattle, Case has supported numerous breed events and activities and is quick to share the breed's successes with cattlemen nationwide. Hoover and his wife, Susan, continue to operate Case Real Estate in Marshfield, Mo. In 2020, The Livestock Marketeers, a fraternity of livestock fieldmen, auctioneers and sale managers, inducted Case into their Hall of Fame during the organization's 55th Annual Banquet.

A Hall of Fame Livestock Auctioneer deserves recognition from a breed he has served so well over the years. Late last year, the Santa Gertrudis Breeders International Board of Directors named Hoover Case as an inductee into the Santa Gertrudis Breeders International Hall of Fame, recognizing him for his years of service to the breed and its members.

## ***Dr. Porter Rodgers***

Porter Rodgers, M.D., Santa Gertrudis herd No. 517, understood the importance of breeding cattle that fit the industry and was an early proponent of measuring, collecting and submitting performance data. During his tenure as SGBI president (1983-1985), the association laid the foundation for the breed's first expected progeny differences (EPDs).

Rodgers' operation, located in McRae, Ark., consisted of a purebred herd numbering 300 head and 300 commercial females. Rodgers utilized the performance information collected on the purebred herd to improve the commercial operation and vice versa. He regularly sent cattle to the feedlot, studied the performance results and made breeding decisions based on those results, confirming the cattle being produced on his operation performed for all members of the beef industry. Not only did Rodgers stress the importance of profitable performance domestically, but he also shared his performance-based message with breeders from Argentina, Brazil and South Africa.

In addition to Rodgers' focus on performance, his herd's success in the show ring attracted the attention of Santa Gertrudis breeders worldwide. A notable female, Stretch's Toot-Toot 39/4, calved in January 1984, remains one of the breed's most decorated show animals. The Rodgers Farm bull St. Nick 183/3 had an extremely successful show career, was an early growth trait leader and became one of the breed's more prolific sires during the 1980s, placing 378 offspring in the herdbook.

Joining Winrock Farms, J.B. Hunt and Pat Reeves, Rodgers Farm was part of the successful Razorback Classic Sale that quickly became a premier sale event. The sale also served as the foundation for numerous field days and educational events that provided Rodgers with a platform to spread his message of profitable performance.

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Elected SGBI president in 1983, Rodgers took a leave of absence from his successful medical practice in Searcy, Ark., and traveled extensively, promoting Santa Gertrudis cattle. During his tenure as president, Rodgers and his wife, Carol, attended field days, shows and sales across the United States, as well as the Santa Gertrudis World Congress. In 1983 alone, he attended 13 SGBI point shows. Always a supporter of youth activities, Rodgers made sure his farm gates were always open for junior exhibitors traveling to and from shows. His pleasant personality, combined with his love for the breed, made Rodgers an extremely popular president. His drive, leadership and vision resulted in extraordinary growth for the association. His passion for Santa Gertrudis cattle was infectious and, in 1983, registrations increased by 3,000 head.

SGBI Board member, association president, breed ambassador and visionary are just a few of the words that describe Dr. Porter Rodgers. Recognizing his impact on the breed and association, Dr. Porter Rodgers has been named a member of the Santa Gertrudis Breeders International Hall of Fame.

## ***Diana Ruiz***

Four decades ago, life looked a little different than it does today. For example, SGBI didn't have its own computer. Also back then, genetic selection using expected progeny differences (EPDs) was in its infancy and had not yet experienced widespread implementation. Yes, things were done a little differently 43 years ago, but, through it all, one constant for the association and its loyal Santa Gertrudis breeders has been Diana Ruiz, SGBI registration and member services specialist.

Ruiz joined SGBI as a key punch operator in 1978. Since SGBI didn't have its own computer in those days, she would enter information such as new cattle registrations or transfers on a cassette tape before taking it to a local company in downtown Kingsville to be processed.

Over the years, Ruiz has worn many hats at the association. Through it all, the highlight has been building relationships with breeders from coast to coast.

"I have made numerous lifelong friends through past and present employees and our wonderful membership," she says. "I am so grateful to have been a part of this association for as long as I have."

When you've been around Santa Gertrudis breeders as long as Ruiz, you have a front-row seat to watch as families grow and the next generation of breeders become association leaders.

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"Another highlight is to see these young breeders, for example, Wes McDaniel and Yancey Strait, who started out as juniors, ended up on the SGBI Board and then as SGBI presidents, and now their children are showing," she shares.

With decades of experience, Ruiz is the go-to person at the association, and SGBI members are quick to sing her praises.

"Diana's loyalty to the SGBI family is second-to-none," says Gene Kubecka, Wendt Ranches, Bay City, Texas. "If there is an issue and you want to get the correct answer, Diana is the person at the SGBI office with the knowledge to get it figured out."

Delmo Payne, Grandview Farms, Hamilton, Ala., shares similar sentiments as he reflects on his experiences working with Ruiz since 1986.

"Since I was a new purebred breeder in the '80s, Diana quickly became my go-to girl," Payne shares. "I am sure I had many stupid questions in the old days, but after talking with Diana, I felt perfectly comfortable that the issue would be handled, and she never made me feel uncomfortable. Many breeders across the country feel the same way."

Ruiz has worked with eight executive directors during her career; most recently with Webb Fields who joined the association as executive director in 2020.

"Initially, it was a real comfort for me coming on board knowing that I had someone with 40-plus years of institutional knowledge on staff," Fields says. "Diana has served as a real security blanket for me and a resource no matter the situation as she has served in about every role over the years and seen just about every situation you can image."

It's certain that things look different at SGBI now than they did 43 years ago: SGBI now has more than one computer in its office, EPDs have become standard, and association staff and leadership have come and gone. But through all the ups and downs, Ruiz has served the association and its members with excellence (and a smile), and for that SGBI and its members are forever grateful.

In recognition of her longtime service and countless contributions to the association and its members, Diana Ruiz has been named a member of the Santa Gertrudis Breeders International Hall of Fame.

## **SGBI HOF\_Hoover Case.jpg**

Hoover Case, left, receives the Santa Gertrudis sculpture for his induction into the SGBI Hall of Fame from Joe Jones, center, and Executive Director Webb Fields, right.

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## **SGBI HOF\_Porter Rodgers.jpg**

Dr. Porter Rodgers, left, receives the Santa Gertrudis sculpture from SGBI Executive Director Webb Fields for his induction into the SGBI Hall of Fame.

## **SGBI HOF\_Diana Ruiz.jpg**

Diana Ruiz, center, receives the Santa Gertrudis sculpture for her induction into the SBBI Hall of Fame from John Ford, former SGBI executive director, and Webb Fields, current SGBI executive director.