

American Equine Awareness Celebrates the Legacy of Wild Horse Annie on International Women's Day

Wild Horse Annie is credited for starting the movement to save America's wild mustangs.

ATLANTA, GEORGIA, UNITED STATES, March 7, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Friday, March 8th, will be recognized around the world as International Women's Day. It is a day of global recognition of the social, economic, and political achievements of women. It is important to remember the women who have paved the way for future generations. From social activists to scientists, women have played a crucial role in shaping history. Friday will be a day to recognize their contributions worldwide.



America's wild horse protection community remembers Wild Horse Annie for her work to protect the country's mustangs and burros. Velma Bronn Johnston was born on March 5, 1912. She later became known as Wild Horse Annie because of her efforts to save wild horses from mustangers who hunted the horses for commercial purposes. She is also recognized for her grassroots work to stop the decimation of free roaming mustangs and burros from public lands. Wild Horse Annie generated public support for the horses and burros from her public appearances and the efforts of school children's letter-writing campaigns to the Congress and Senate. Newspapers published articles about the exploitation of wild horses and burros. The Associated Press wrote on July 15, 1959, "Seldom has an issue touched such a responsive chord."

'Wild Horse Annie and the Last of the Mustangs: The Life of Velma Johnston' is a book written by David Cruise and Alison Griffiths. It documents her journey to save mustangs. After following a stock truck hauling animals, the discovery of brutally rounded up and injured horses in the trailer led her to do something about what she saw. A chapter in the book, The Road to Reno, contains a gut wrenching account of what she saw inside the trailer that fateful day.

An excerpt reads, "Where did these horses come from and why are they in such terrible condition?" Velma gasped.

"Oh, they were run in by plane out there," the driver replied, "from the hills of the Comstock Lode."

Velma was sensitive when it came to animals, but she wasn't squeamish. She stood by Charlie when he'd been forced to put a calf out of its misery after a birth gone wrong, and then there were all those puppy litters. She hardly shed tears since her days in the polio cast. But what she saw in that truck was beyond anything she'd ever experienced.

"No point in crying your eyes out over a bunch of useless mustangs," the driver said. "They'll all be dead soon anyway."

"Five days after encountering the stock truck, Velma stood nervously in front of the Bureau of Land Management's regional district offices in downtown Reno. She concluded all trails led to the BLM. Most of the remaining wild horse herds were living on land managed by the Bureau. But she did not know whom to ask for or what to say about her concern for the captured horses."

From this life-changing moment on, Wild Horse Annie, Velma Bronn Johnston, worked to fight for protection of the free-roaming horses throughout Nevada and across all the federal lands in the west. Because of her work, the Wild and Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971 was passed unanimously by the United States House of Representatives and the Senate.

Wild horse advocates remember her to this day. The equine protection community continues her work to overcome powerful and monied special interest groups affecting equine policy at the Federal level. Supporters carry on at state and federal levels, calling on the Bureau of Land Management, Congress and the President of the United States to maintain protections for the country's wild and free-roaming horses and burros.

American Equine Awareness is a Georgia advocacy and awareness organization. The conviction that every horse owner in the United States needs the ability to safely re-home their horse, should a need arise, led to the formation of the organization. The media program shares equine issues and information with the public and news outlets.

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