

Linda Tellington-Jones

A Woman Ahead of Her Time

By Robyn Hood

While much has been written about Linda Tellington-Jones and the development of the Tellington-Jones Equine Awareness Method, aka Tellington TTouch and The Tellington Method, many people are unfamiliar with the other areas of the horse industry in which Linda has been a pioneer. As I look back on the years growing up and having an opportunity to work with my sister Linda, I realize that there are many 'new' things in the horse world that Linda was doing twenty years ago and were looked at as 'strange.' The TTEAM work is no different, its basis comes from a classical background with horses. There are few horse people in the world with a background as diverse and accomplished as Linda's. This enables her to speak to riders of all disciplines all over the world.

Linda has been riding all her life and started showing at major shows at the age of 11. During her teenage years, she 'catch rode' at shows, as well as showing her own horses.

She has won top-flight competitions in every discipline in which she has competed: steeplechasing, Western and English pleasure and equitation, sidesaddle, dressage, driving, jumping, hunter, three-day eventing and endurance.

Linda co-owned and operated a breeding farm with ninety Thoroughbred broodmares, four stallions and twenty Arabians in the early 60's.

In 1961, Linda completed two 100 mile races within weeks of each other, a feat then considered impossible. First came a top ten finish in the Tevis Cup on Bint Gulida. Five weeks later, Linda and Bint Gulida set a record in the Jim Shoulders 100



Photo: Linda on Bint Gulida - unhandled when she bought her at three. They went on to set records in Endurance riding.



Photo: Linda and four of her students from the Pacific Coast Equestrian Research Farm during a cross country tour, in the mid 60' riding Hungarian horses, two mares and two stallions

mile ride, finishing six hours ahead of the next horse in thirteen hours and thirty-six minutes. She also won the Best Conditioned Horse award. Bint Gulida became one of the legendary broodmares in the endurance world producing numerous top endurance horses including Kuwiya, Jackpot, and the famed Cougar Rock.

Linda received a classical cavalry horsemanship education from her first husband, Wentworth Tellington. Linda and Went founded the Pacific Coast Equestrian Ranch Farm which included a nine-month residential school for instructors in the United States - the first in North America that was not an apprenticeship program and included daily lectures and riding classes. Graduates were expected to complete a 50 miles-in-one-day endurance ride; compete at preliminary three-day events; show at second level dressage; and show in English and Western Pleasure.

In the early 60's, Linda became a recognized American Horse Show Association (AHSA) and North American Trail Riding Conference (NATRC) judge while at the same time participating in numerous competitions.

In the summer of 1963, Linda decided to take a team of horses and riders through three major events: the Tevis Cup, the Washington State Horsemen's Ride (a 2 day 100), and the Mt. Diablo Ride (a Class A NATRC ride). In the Tevis Cup, all the riders were entered as one entry. All five horses completed, in top twenty time, to

give their team collective completion. By the end of the summer, Linda's group had won twenty out of twenty-two possible first place awards in the three events. All horse and rider teams finished in all three events.

In 1965, Linda and Went published *Physical Therapy for the Athletic Horse*, the first monograph published about using equine massage for speeding up recovery time after taxing athletic events. This was followed in 1967 by the first endurance manual. These two publications were combined and edited into the 1979 Doubleday book, *Endurance and Competitive Trail Riding*, again co-authored by Linda and Went.

Linda's first exposure to Therapeutic Riding came in 1958 when she taught a 12 year old girl, hearing impaired and non-verbal, to ride. Not only did she learn to ride, but competed successfully in Hunter classes both on the flat and over fences

In 1964, at the Pacific Coast Equestrian Research Farm in Badger, California, Linda organized a three month program for mentally impaired young adults between the ages of 15 - 21, from a California State training program. She experimented with great success with the use of bareback riding to increase her student's confidence and sense of independence.

Linda coordinated and taught the first adult education courses in horse management and horse psychology for the University of California in the early 1970's. She developed and taught a safe and force free method of starting a horse under saddle for amateur owners which was referred to in many magazines as the Tellington Method.



Photo: Linda doing the Clouded Leopard on a Clouded Leopard at the Zurich Zoo.

At the Pacific Coast Equestrian Research Farm (PCERF), Linda and Went researched and developed many products which are now considered fairly new and innovative in the horse industry. Items such as humane muzzles, an aluminum muzzle to prevent cribbing and wind sucking but still allows a horse to eat and drink; kelp, now used regularly as a feed supplement; an every-day-wormer Linda and Went developed, tested and used for years at the PCERF; and an Horsemen's One Step saddle cleaner very similar to Carnauba.

In the mid 60's, Linda and Went designed and tested rear-facing horse trailers. They kept track of pulse and respiration on horses traveling both forward and backward and published the findings. They traveled around the U.S. with four Hungarian horses (one of the first Warmblood breeds in the U.S.), including two stallions, a mare and a gelding and gave demonstrations of a jumping routine without bridles at major horse shows.

Linda was a founding member of the California Dressage Society, a Pony Club Instructor and member of the Los Altos Hunt Club.

In the early 70's Linda wrote a series of articles on distance riding for German publisher Ursula Bruns' magazine, 'Freizeit Im Sattel.' These articles led to Linda's initial trips to Germany to conduct clinics in distance riding.

In 1975, she was invited to participate in Equitana, the largest horse trade fair in the world, where she demonstrated bridleless jumping with three horses jumping in formation. At the next Equitana, Linda imported a Competitive Trail horse and introduced yet another aspect of riding to Germany. She has participated at Equitana ever since and is considered a major attraction. Linda was instrumental in the initial importation of Canadian horses into the German market through Equitana.



Photo: Linda demonstrating her adaptation of the Feldenkrais work for animals to Moshe Feldenkrais and class in about 1976.



Photo: Linda has been a major presenter at Equitana Germany since 1975. Her she is riding a dressage horse that she just met bridleless. Hard to imagine many 80 year old rider who would mount unknown horses like Linda does, especially without a bridle.

Between 1975 - 1978, Linda began conducting clinics for handling and retraining problem horses throughout Germany. At the same time, her ongoing studies as a human Feldenkrais practitioner introduced radical insight into the dynamics of so-called 'problem horses'. In 1978, the formal system of TTEAM was birthed at a six-week research project conducted at Ursula Bruns' Reken Test Center. This collaboration also led to the publication of the Tellington-Jones Equine Awareness Method: an Introduction to the T.E.A.M. Approach to Problem-Free Training, still one of the best selling horse books in Germany and the U.S.

In 1976, she coordinated the importation and conditioning of fifteen Icelandic horses which were then ridden on the Great American Horse Race by international riders - four Germans, one Austrian and one Swiss.

Since 1975, Linda has traveled constantly teaching TTEAM worldwide to amateurs, professionals and veterinarians. Her presentations to the veterinary community include the University of Zurich Veterinary School, the University of Vienna Veterinary School, the Ohio State Veterinary Association, and the University of California at Davis Veterinary School. She gave a two-week intensive course to a group of twelve Russian veterinarians in 1985. Linda has worked on Olympic level horses from almost every nation competing in modern equestrian sports including Canada, United States, the Soviet Union, Switzerland, France, Austria, Germany, Finland, England and Australia.

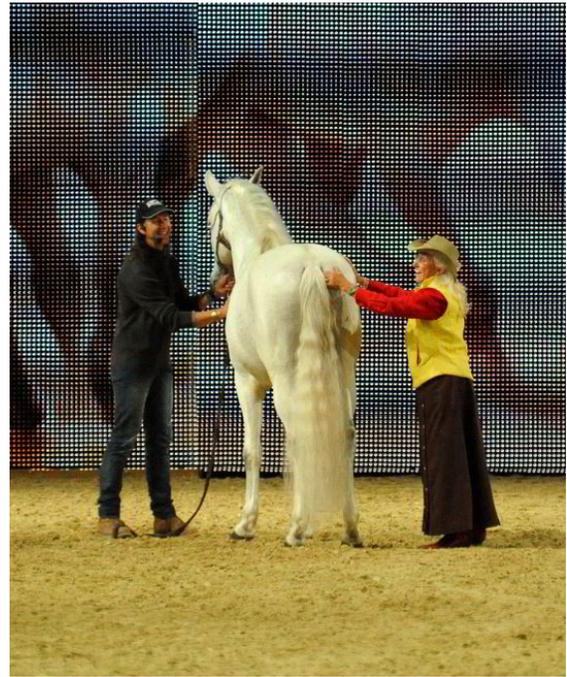


Photo: Linda and Fredric Pignon during one of the demos they did together. During his time travelling with Cavalia Fredric used Touch with his horses daily.

The consistent and often dramatic results obtained from TTEAM work on horses caught the eye of the zoo community early on. Linda has worked for many years with Ewald Isenbugel, V.M.D. at the Zurich Zoo. Linda was a keynote speaker at the 20th Annual Zoo keepers Convention in San Diego, California. She has given presentations and consulted on animals at the Moscow Zoo, Frankfurt Zoo, San Diego Zoo and Wild Animal Park, Los Angeles Zoo, Syracuse Zoo, Washington National Zoo, Toledo Zoo and Fossil Rim Wildlife Center. Her work with zoos has been instrumental in providing safe and non threatening ways of handling and healing exotic animals.

Linda made ten trips to the former Soviet Union to work with horses and riders, including Olympic horses and Olympic veterinarians, to teach the TTEAM work. She worked with riders at the Bitsa Olympic Horse Complex in Moscow. When Linda first started working with the Soviet Dressage riders in 1984 they were eighteenth in the world. In 1990 the Soviet Dressage Team was second at the World Equestrian Games on the same horses they were riding when Linda first met them.

Throughout the years, Linda has maintained a deep and abiding commitment to therapeutic riding, conducting many clinics and private consultations to therapeutic riding programs in Europe and the U.S. In 1987, Linda was one of the key speakers at the 6th World Congress for Therapeutic Riding in Toronto. In 1988, she gave a clinic for the Swiss Association for Therapeutic Riding and Vaulting at the invitation of Marrian Gang, noted Swiss author on therapeutic riding. Since 1989, Linda has been featured at both the NARRA Annual Conventions and the Delta Society World Congresses on Relations between Humans and Animals. The TTEAM methods are being used in a growing number of Humane Animal Shelters and in Animal Assisted Therapy programs thanks in large part to the continuing work of Tom Beckett, DVM and TTEAM Practitioner Marnie Reeder.

In November, 1989, the Austrian Equestrian Federation hosted Linda for a TTEAM demonstration that was a required event for continued licensing for all instructors, trainers, and student instructors and trainers in Austria.

In January, 1990, Linda was a featured speaker at the Canadian Equestrian Federation annual convention in Vancouver, and in March, 1990 was a key speaker at the American Endurance Ride Conference Annual Convention.

Linda's interest in endurance riding has continued as the TTEAM method has become an accepted part of the care of endurance horses. TTEAM has been used on the Winning horses and teams at the World Championship Endurance Riding, the North American Championships and the Race of Championships as well as most major endurance races.



Photo: German dressage horse, Cosmos, wearing the Bemer Vet. Linda was the spokesperson for Bemer vet after she had found the benefits of the Bemer Pro for people.

TTEAM has been used on most species of animals and will come full circle back to humans as the Animal Ambassadors program takes TTEAM into schools.

In 1991 Linda's produced a Starting Young Horse Video, which became one of the most popular horse videos ever produced and was the most highly rated of five videos made about starting young horses.

In 1992 Linda received the ARICP Lifetime Achievement Award (American Riding Instructors Certificate Program). Recognized an individual whose lifetime experience and accomplishments exemplify the pursuit of excellence and uncommon devotion to the art and science of riding instruction.

As the work started to spread more to dogs and cats two videos came onto the market, Happier, Healthier Cats and Happier Healthier Dogs.

The book Llama Handling and Training by Linda and Marty McGee showed people a new way of working with their llamas.

In 1994 Linda became Horsewoman of Distinction North American Horsemen's Association. For a stronger, safer more insurable horse industry.

TTEAM underwent a bit of a facelift and name change to Tellington TTouch, which was implemented when Thane marketing promoted a set of videos, flashcards and booklets called a TTouch of Magic for horses, dogs and cats that sold over 100 000 tapes in the first 4 months alone and made the list of top 100 infomercials in 1994.



Photo: Linda doing Ttouch on Daisy, a 32 year old Tapir. While Daisy enjoys being scratched she would normally just lie down and go to sleep. When Linda did Ttouch, she sat down and stayed totally present during the session.

In 1995 the book Getting in TTouch – Understand and Influence Your Horse’s Personality by Linda and co-author Sybil Taylor was published first in English and German and later in Japanese, Slovenian, Dutch, Danish, Swedish, Norwegian and Spanish

In 1997 Linda was included in the Spur Magazine article about women who are the backbone of the horse industry. SPUR celebrates the contributions of a selection of them. “A Century of Horse Women: 1997 Hall of Fame” Compiled by L. A. Pomeroy. Spur Magazine, December, 1997 pp. 60-61.

The TTouch for Dressage Horses Video was published in both English and German, as well as the book Let’s Ride with Linda Tellington-Jones, co-authored by Andrea Pabel, a book for younger horse lovers, which was published in 7 languages.

In 1999 the very popular book Getting in TTouch with your Dog was published and later translated into 8 languages. It was updated in 2012.

Linda also wrote the book Improve Your Horse’s Wellbeing, which was published in English, German, Italian, Japanese, Slovenian, Spanish, Swedish and Korean.

The TTEAM Up With Your Horse newsletter won best newsletter of the year by the American Horse Publication.

In the year 2000 Linda joined the Board of Directors of the Pacific Pet Foundation. The Pacific Pet Foundation was created to save and enhance the lives of relinquished and adoptable pets. The purposes of the foundation is to serve our community, its pets and people, by offering services, programs and facilities to promote pet adoptions, assure responsible pet ownership and provide long term care for the un-adopted.

Since the year 2000 celebrated the 25th anniversary of TTEAM and TTOUCH Linda organized the first of 3 Celebrations, conventions with a variety of speakers attended by hundreds of Practitioners and people new to TTouch alike in Santa Fe, NM. There will be another in Santa Fe, NM in February, 2019.

In 2001 Linda created two videos called Solving Riding Problems with TTEAM 1. From the Ground and 2. In the Saddle.

In 2002 in celebration of Trail Blazer Magazine's 25th Anniversary, Linda was awarded the

"Publisher's Silver Star Award of Recognition."

She also released the DVD Unleash Your Dog’s Potential which today is still the best selling DVD on TTouch for dogs.

In 2003 Linda joined Dr. Bill Benda's Advisory Board of the Unbridled Foundation, a non-profit organization that supports equine-assisted therapy centers in creating and publishing clinical outcome research. Our mission is to have such therapy become one of the options presented to the parents of disabled children by the medical profession.

Linda wrote and published the book TTouch for You about the work on humans with Sybil Taylor as well as the book Getting in TTouch with your Cat.

In 2004 Linda was voted RFD-TV Magazine Personality of the Month, January 2004

She also released the DVD Hit it Off with Your Horse, which taught viewers about the Personality Analysis Linda is well known for.

In 2006 Linda became a Massage Therapy Hall of Fame Inductee.

She wrote and released the Ultimate Horse Behaviour book, co-written with Bobbie Lieberman. It was introduced at the Celebration and later translated into German, Dutch, French and Italian.

The following year, 2007 she was the Equine Industry Vision Award finalist. Sponsored by Pfizer Animal Health, the award is intended to recognize innovation, leadership and service. She was also inducted in the Hall of Fame which was sponsored by the Western States Exposition.

Linda also received the Silver Star Award from Trail Blazer Magazine

The book Getting in TTouch with Your Puppy was published in 2007 and translated into German and Italian.

In 2008 Linda Tellington-Jones received an Honorary Doctorate degree from the Wisdom University and was granted the position of Director of the Institute for Interspecies Communication.

In 2010 she was named first honorary member of the National Board of Certification for Animal Acupressure & Massage (NBCAAM).

In 2013 Linda and her co-author Rebecca Didier wrote the book Dressage with Mind, Body and Soul. The same year Shannon Yewell published her book Strike a Long Trot about Linda's early years.

In 2014 Linda received the Certificate of Recognition for exceptional achievements in development and research in the field of pet behavior by the DHVE - Dachverband fuer Haustierverhaltensberatung in Europe e.V. (Umbrella Organization for Companion Animals in Europe).

In 2015 Linda was celebrated for attending Equitana in Essen Germany as a valued guest speaker for the past 40 years.

In 2016 Linda became the US spokesperson for the BEMER vet product - this is the first time Linda has so visibly endorsed any product. After experiencing the benefits of the Bemer for herself and family she was inspired to promote the version for horses.

Linda has always been about twenty years ahead of her time with an ongoing commitment to exploring, learning and sharing her knowledge with others.

Linda has also brought TTouch into the world of humans, teaching weekend and week-long workshops over the past 30 years in programs for individuals and their family members, as well as for health-care professionals. She is a visiting faculty member at the University of Minnesota where she has co-taught Tellington TTouch for humans annually since 2002. At this time Tellington TTouch was included in the research program at the University of Minnesota's Center for Spirituality and Healing. The results of studies on humans by Cecilia Wendler, PhD, RN, CCRN have been published in three prestigious professional nursing journals and the Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science.