

AN OPEN LETTER FROM KEN RAMSEY



Photo: Daniel Sigal

THE JOY OF MY LIFE

For those of you who know Ken Ramsey, you know that I am a fierce competitor who is passionate and consumed with a love of horses, racing and winning.* I write this letter to tell you and also remind myself that any success I have been so blessed to achieve is due to my wife of 53 years.

Many of you may know the story of Kitten's Joy. It's my honor to tell you 'the story behind the story' which began in 1954 when I first started dating my wife, Sarah Kathern, whom I nicknamed 'Kitten'.

We logically named Sarah Kathern's first horse Kitten's First. After beating the boys first time out, in her second start she broke her hip leaving the starting gate and was so badly injured that the attending veterinarian recommended we put her down. With luck and persistence the mare survived, however three of her foals died during delivery. The mare was so special to me and my wife, I came up with the idea to give it yet another try and deliver a foal via caesarean section. The aptly named Kitten's Joy would go on to be Eclipse Champion Turf Horse, Eclipse Finalist for Horse of the Year and was in large part responsible for our winning an Eclipse Award for Leading Owner in 2004.

In 2011, Ramsey Farm bred 15 Stakes Winners including Breeders' Cup Winner Stephanie's Kitten. When Stephanie's Kitten won the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies Turf – with all my family there – knowing we had bred her stallion, bred her mare and bred the two together, this was perhaps the most satisfying moment in my 40+ years in the horse business.

I write this letter as a tribute to my wonderful wife who continues to inspire me. I hope it will be a reminder and inspiration to all fellow breeders to never give up, to always believe in your dreams and to know those dreams can actually come true.

Thank you Kitten, the joy of my life.

Kenneth L. Ramsey

*On November 30th, Kenneth and Sarah Ramsey were the first recipients of the John Deere Award as Outstanding Breeders of the 2011 Breeders' Cup Challenge series and the Breeders' Cup World Championships. The honor was given to the breeder who received the highest number of points based upon graded/group first-place finishes in the 68 Breeders' Cup Challenge races and the 15 Breeders' Cup World Championships races held this year.

In addition, in 2011, the Ramsey's won the Owner Title at Keeneland, Turfway Park, and for an unprecedented 18th time, won the Owner Title at Churchill Downs.