

## **2025 Fair Dedication**

Jeanne (Heckler) Lampe was born in Springfield, Ohio, the daughter of the late Dick and Jane Heckler, and has lived in Clark County her entire life. Her parents were the owners of Miller Printing Company and due to their hectic business lives and two children under the age of 2, they purchased their first 150 acres of farmland in 1956 as a weekend escape. The land was overgrown with thorn trees and the only structure on the property was an old log cabin with an outhouse and no running water, but the family visited the farm every weekend. Over time, they acquired additional acreage, and today the farm is known as Thornhill Farms, a 1425- acre crop and livestock operation in northeastern Clark County owned by Jeanne, who serves as the managing partner, and her daughter Jessica. Jeanne and her husband Bill reside at Thornhill Farms.

Jeanne's passion for horses began at an early age on the farm with her pony, Blaze. Every weekend she would pack a lunch and ride around the property until it was time for dinner. She was an active member of the Open Gates and Town Trotters 4H clubs in her youth with her horse Mr. Cactus Star. After graduating from North High School in 1973, Jeanne pursued higher education at William Woods University in Fulton, Missouri, where she earned her degrees in Business and Equestrian Studies.

Jessica, Jeanne's daughter, also developed a love for Arabian horses at any early age. She participated in 4H and traveled across the country to attend regional and national horse shows, experiencing a wide range of equestrian venues.

During Jessica's 4H years, a group of horse parents began discussing the need to cover the horse arena to protect the participants from the blazing July sun and heavy rain storms during the Fair. From these conversations, the Ohio Equine and Agricultural Association (The Champions Center) was born. Jeanne became one of the founding board members and has served as Treasurer and Controller since its inception in 2002. In 2021, the Board asked Jeanne to step into the role of Interim Executive Director. She accepted with enthusiasm and has served in that position for nearly 4 years, overseeing much-needed upgrades and repairs and helping to restore The Champions Center as the premier horse show facility in the Midwest.

One of Jeanne's first priorities was to rebuild the trust and foster collaboration with the Fair Board and its Executive Director. She played a key role in encouraging open dialogue and ensuring that the Executive Director of the Fairgrounds was kept informed of all developments at The Champions Center. Today they meet regularly to address potential scheduling conflicts and find mutually beneficial solutions. Their ongoing partnership has been vital to maintaining and strengthening the relationship between the two organizations. Today, The Champions Center and its dedicated staff stand firm in their commitment to foster significant economic impact for Clark County by hosting 44 events in 2024 and contributing \$48,000,000 in economic impact.

Jeanne continues to actively volunteer with many boards and organization in our area. Her agriculture and business experience as a business owner for 35 years brings a wealth of valuable knowledge to all of these endeavors. Her genuine love and concern for her family, friends, staff, and community certainly allows her to be deserving of this recognition.