2027
Board of Director Candidates

Linda Barnes



Dear Members, I am thrilled to announce my candidacy for re-election to the MQHA Board of Directors. Having served on the board for the past 3 years, and as an active member of our association for over 20 years, my commitment to this community and the horse industry remains stronger than ever. As a retiree following a 38-year career in the insurance industry, I am excited to continue to dedicate my schedule, professional background, and industry knowledge to ensure the continued growth and protection of our association. Over the past three years, it has been an absolute privilege to represent your interests on the board. During my tenure, I have focused on ensuring that our events, and member benefits continue to meet your needs by asking what you would like to see. I believe that my 38 years in risk management, compliance, and fiscal oversight within the insurance sector provide a unique advantage to our board. If re-elected, I will focus my time and energy on:

- Member Advocacy: Creating clear lines of communication so your voices are heard as we shape our future plans and decisions.
- Strategic Growth: Developing fresh initiatives to welcome new riders and owners while honoring our long-standing traditions. Our partnership with MSU in creating the Equine Connection is an excellent example of this desire. Experience, professional oversight, and a lifelong love for horses are what I bring to the table. I would be deeply honored to receive your vote to continue serving you on the Board of Directors. Sincerely, Linda Barnes

Kyle Brenner



I am seeking the opportunity to return to the Michigan Quarter Horse Association Board of Directors and contribute a combination of prior MQHA leadership, current board governance experience, executive operating leadership, and a longstanding connection to the Quarter Horse community. My previous service with MQHA included roles as Vice President and Amateur President, along with volunteer responsibilities in show management and financial statements/budgeting. That experience gave me a practical understanding of the work required to support members, events, volunteers, and the long-term health of the association. Since that time, my professional and board experience has continued to grow. I currently serve as a Director of the Michigan Infrastructure & Transportation Association, a role I have held since 2022. I also serve on the Board of Trustees of BCT Benefits and currently serve as Co-Chairperson for the Builders Contractors Trust. In May 2026, I completed the University of Michigan Ross Executive Education Board Director Program, further strengthening my preparation in board governance and director responsibilities. Professionally, I have spent more than a decade as Chief Operating Officer of Brenner Excavating, Inc., with responsibilities spanning operations, EEO, safety, corporate finance, and organizational leadership. Earlier in my career, I also served as Farm Manager for Kyle Petty's Adaumont Farm and held leadership roles with Victory Junction. I would welcome the opportunity to bring this combination of institutional MQHA knowledge, current governance experience, financial and operational discipline, and commitment to service back to the MQHA Board. I believe strong associations are built through engaged members, responsible governance, thoughtful planning, and directors who are willing to do the work required to move the organization forward.

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September Croel

Having grown up on the Michigan Quarter Horse Association circuit, this organization and its people have always held a special place in my heart. As a past MQHA Queen and current AAQHC Queen Sponsor, I understand the impact these opportunities can have on young people and the lasting memories and friendships they create. I would love the opportunity to give back by supporting future queens, encouraging our youth, and helping provide opportunities for the next generation to grow, succeed, and find their place in this industry. I believe in preserving the traditions that make MQHA special while continuing to build a strong and welcoming future for our association.

Lee Heighton



My wife Angie and I have been members of MQHA for approximately 15 years. I previously served on the Ohio Amateur Quarter Horse Association Board of Directors for several years and found the experience to be very rewarding. Having been involved in the quarter horse community for many years, I would welcome the opportunity to contribute to MQHA's continued growth and success. I believe it's important to have an active and engaged board that listens to its members and works towards the best interests of the organization and the quarter horse community, and I'd appreciate the opportunity to serve.
Sincerely,
Lee Heighton

Rob Kirkpatrick



My name is Rob Kirkpatrick, and I would appreciate the opportunity to serve on the MQHA Board of Directors again. I'd like to share a little about myself and my involvement in the association. I am an active Quarter Horse owner, breeder, and exhibitor with a long history of involvement in the Michigan Quarter Horse Association. My husband, Jarrod Bush, and I raise and show Quarter Horses, competing at both the state and national levels. I previously served on the MQHA Board of Directors, including as president, and have extensive leadership experience outside the association. I am currently serving as township supervisor, previously served as township clerk, and have held leadership positions in other organizations. My experience as both an exhibitor and association leader has given me an understanding of the challenges facing our industry and the importance of representing all aspects of the MQHA membership. I would welcome the opportunity to return to the board and contribute to the continued success of MQHA.
Thank you for your consideration. Rob Kirkpatrick