

Jean Thornton began riding an assortment of family ponies as a toddler and rode miles bareback with halter and lead rope down the field roads of Minnesota before her introduction to showing at age 12. She was the youngest child allowed to attend horse camp at age 6 and competed in the highest of five groups by the second year. She was immediately determined to pass all of the Certified Horsemanship Awards and became the youngest person in Minnesota to pass the Advanced Level at that time.

As a teenager, Jean trained and showed a number of horses for friends and family, ran games in 4-H with a Thoroughbred Appaloosa cross, vacationed with family each summer at a variety of western dude ranches, and then found Galcimer "Ghost," her first purebred Arabian who lived on the farm until the age of 34. They showed in all of the disciplines offered at the Arabian shows. Soon after being introduced to dressage in collage, Jean and Ghost quickly achieved Arabian National Grand and Reserve Championships through Fourth Level, earned their USDF Performance Awards through Third Level, and earned their Medallion Club Award from the U.S. Combined Training Association. Galcimer allowed Jean to achieve her USDF Qualified Rider Award and then her USDF Bronze Medal.

Jean's next show prospect was an "off the track" Thoroughbred, "Party Agent" who appeared to have a bright future as a youngster earning an 84% with Jean at Training Level, his USDF performance certificates through First Level and his Medallion Club Award from the U.S. Combined Training Association. An enormous amount of time, effort, expertise, and money could not help him withstand the physical demands of being a riding horse.

After such a great disappointment, Jean searched for nearly a year determined to find an athlete sturdy enough to maintain its soundness through the many years required to become a Grand Prix horse. She called nearly a thousand sellers, watched almost one hundred videos, visited horses in CA, MD, VA, PA and France open to any breed with the right movement until one day she popped a video into the machine and knew immediately that the proud Lipizzaner stallion prancing out of the forest up to the hill top would be her next soul mate. Jean bought Conversano II Aloha II "Lou" as a four year old and immediately had him approved for breeding by the American Warmblood Registry. They have now earned every USDF Performance Award through Intermediare I, 26 USDF All-Breeds National Grand Championships, 10 USDF All-Breed National Reserve Championships, 12 ABIG/USDF Regional Championship Show Awards, 24 other Championship Awards, and over 100 other first place awards. Lou has allowed Jean to achieve her USDF Silver and Gold Medals. In addition to dressage, Lou and Jean have also competed in eventing and combined driving and entertain people with their circus tricks and sidesaddle Grand Prix musical freestyle performances.

Jean became a USDF "L" graduate at age 22, and is now a USEF licensed "r" dressage judge. She has a B.S. from the U of MN in interior design, has achieved her USDF University Certificate, Diploma, and Bronze Diploma, has completed the Colorado State University short course in Equine Reproductive Management and Artificial Insemination and has been instructing for over 20 years. Jean and her husband Denis raise, train and sell young Warmbloods on their 20 acre farm in Deleon Springs.

Now they are focusing primarily on producing palomino Warmbloods to sell and also to create their dream of competing with a team of four palomino sporthorses in combined driving events. They are crossing their newly imported cremello German Warmblood stallion, Blue Eyed Dream with Dutch, Hanoverian and Oldenburg mares. Dream's first foal crop all achieved First Premium at the American Warmblood Inspection and two were First Premium Premier. His second year all his foals were either First Premium with AWR or Gold Premium with RhPSI. The third year they were again all First Premium with AWR and on was First Premium Premier. Dream won his first Championship as a four year old at the Black Prong Combined Driving Event and has been First Place at Second Level ridden dressage as a four year old.