Equestrian professor to leave her 'home' at William Woods at end of semester By Dani Moritz 4/3/13 Dews @fultonsun.com

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Through everything she has accomplished and everywhere life has taken her, William Woods University has always played a major role in Dr. Linda McClaren's life.

Now the professor of equestrian studies and hunter/ jumper instructor at WWU is preparing to leave the place she calls "home."

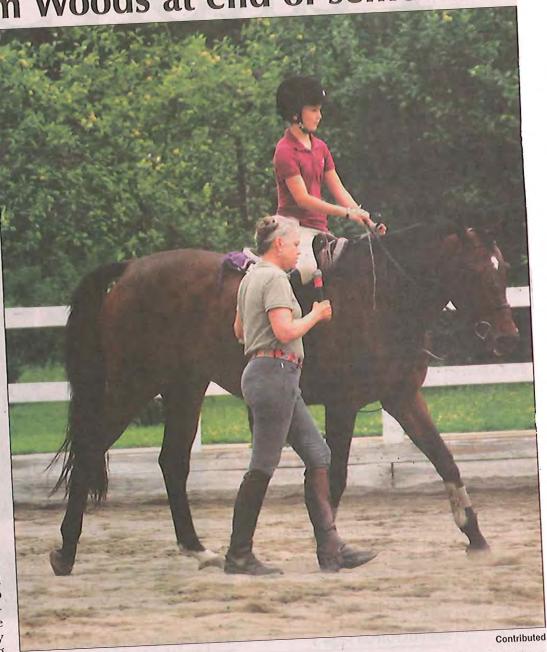
McClaren grew up in Columbia, taking riding lessons locally and participating in summer riding programs at Christian College (now Columbia College) and Stephens College.

Throughout high school she aspired to attend William Woods, where she completed her undergraduate degree, and later her master's degree.

McClaren joked that she can tell stories of proficiency exams, a rigorous assessment for equestrian students still in effect, from

"We rode in front of the panel of faculty members and, while on our horses at the end of the ride, we rode into the middle and had individual things we had to do," she said. "I do remember sitting on the horse facing the panel of faculty members and answering questions."

After graduating from William Woods, McClaren worked for Deb Booker - a



William Woods University equestrian professor Linda McClaren relays instructions to a young rider. A graduate and longtime instructor, McClaren will be retiring at the end of this year. She said she is going to miss her "home" at William Woods.

for six or seven years, helping manage her farm, the Horse Fair, in Columbia.

former WWU instructor —

won several championships

at the American Quarter

Horse World and Congress

adjunct professor at William

Woods during that time.

McClaren was also an

horse shows.

"Even though I was in and out of the 'A' horse show During the 80s, she world, I was also in and out of William Woods during with Kenny worked Burgdorfer, a professional horse trainer, breeder and dealer who taught at WWU while McClaren was work-

most of those years," she said. "I feel like I've lived my whole life at William Woods, or most of my life." ing for Booker. Together, McClaren returned to her McClaren and Burgdorfer

cuit in Omaha.

alma mater as a faculty member in 1995, and has been there ever since.

"I love that this is a microcosm of the horse industry," she said. "I love that all kinds of horses live here and all kinds of horse people and you can find your

nections to connections in

those industries. You can

find a way to spend your

life with horses at William

Woods that may or may not

have anything to do with

When she and Burgdorfer broke off their partnership niche in a lot of different with in 1992, McClaren ways." spent a few years working She added, "Even if it's not something we specialize in like racing and breeding, there are people on faculty

riding horses or teaching and showing on the "A" cirlessons." While at William Woods,

earned the

McClaren Horse Shows Missouri Association

Instructor of the Year Award twice (1999, 2001), as well as the Dads' Association-Louis D. Beaumont Distinguished Award Professor

Excellence in Teaching in 2005. More importantly, she's made a major impact on

students' lives. "I've known Linda for a long time and I have always looked up to her," said Danielle Beaver, a junior equestrian science major from Fulton, "She is an

amazing person. She has a great sense of humor and is such a joy to be around. Linda teaches you to set your standards high and never settle for anything who have connections in less than your best. I am those industries or con-

lucky to have had her as a teacher. She will be missed by all." "My education with Linda has not only made me a better rider, but a better

horse woman," said Jacque Franco, a senior equine science major from San Diego, Calif. "Her empathetic approach, both on the ground and under saddle, has had a profound influence on me and affected how I ride and work with

horses. What I have learned

from Linda will stay with me

wherever I go in the horse

industry." After she retires this year, McClaren plans to do a lot of

traveling, writing and art. "I am going to continue to stay in touch with all

the wonderful students and graduates that I have met here over the years and travel and see what they're up to," she said. "I want to go see them and see what they're up to and do some

clinics ... or I think I could

be the ultimate barn sitter, They could have a day or two off and I could do their lessons or whatever. It doesn't have to be a formal clinic."

Although it is hard for McClaren to leave behind her home at William Woods, she looks forward to new possibilities.

She leaves this piece of advice for her successoradvice that truly embodies McClaren's philosophy on teaching as well as life: "There's a wall of bits in my office. There's a horse

for every one of those. There may only be one horse that that bit works for ... but when you have people coming in from all different backgrounds all over the country and you have horses coming in from all different backgrounds and all over the country, you have to try things that might be something out of the

box and see if something

works."