



Living the Dream, One Horse at a Time



Harvey Mackay once said "Find something you love to do and you will never have to work a day in your life." This is apparent in young Hilary Van Gerpen, who found a way to turn her love for horses into a career. The Midwestern beauty has taken her horse training vision from her hometown of Avon, South Dakota halfway across the United States. Growing up around horses, she became acquainted with the large animal at a very young age. Her father Rodney, an avid rider, first sat her atop a horse at age two. Although while riding a year later she fell off and broke her arm, it didn't deter her from getting back on.

"It wasn't even the horse's fault," she explained. She had a slick snow suit on which made it too slippery for her to sit steadily on the horse's back and she slid off. "I was back on the horse the next day," she laughed.

Though Van Gerpen and her dad Rodney love riding, mom Connie and older brother Paul don't take much interest in it, though all have supported her in her riding interests. She started showing horses in 4-H and around age twelve entered the world of barrel racing and rodeo. She continued to rodeo for many years and even earned a rodeo scholarship at Oklahoma Panhandle State University. After she attended there for two years she decided to move closer to home and attended school at South Dakota State University, in Brookings, also participating



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