

The 2026 ALSA Grand Nationals is dedicated to Sally and Jeff Ruckers in recognition of their outstanding contributions to ALSA and the llama community.



Sally Rucker has been involved with llamas since 1985 when she began showing and training with her mentor Eva Domati in Houston, Tx. She participated in the first performance classes in Houston when Susan Tellez brought obstacles to the show. We trained them for a day and showed them the next day. Charlie Lockhart was also a great mentor to Sally and advised her to buy Dee Swartz's herd in Haley Idaho. Sally moved to a ranch in Florissant, Co. 1987 and drew the logo and named it Stage Stop Llamas. Her husband, who initiated the llama venture to escape his oil industry job, separated from Sally, and she and her 8-year-old and 4-year-old began ranching. They threw themselves into llamas. They held three Tellington-Jones training clinics and formed a friendship with John Mallon. Greta Carson sent her ranch manager out to help Sally design fencing for the ranch so that she could manage the llamas on her own. Charlie Lockhart helped her pick up the llamas in Idaho. Without the generous and brilliant help of those mentors she would have been clueless. Sally, with a horse and dog training background, knew that when money was limited it was important to study bloodlines and that is how she approached buying in the future. She gave a presentation on the

ILR cruise that is still available through the ILR, Pedigree Power and used that knowledge to do the color reading for many auctions beginning with the Firecracker Auctions. Pre ALSA, Sally judged the youth shows in San Antonio and Houston for several years. She contributed llamas for them to use with their Loan A Llama Programs. She trained golf caddies and was on Good Morning America with her llama Charlie Brown opening the Cripple Creek Golf Course. She also did a celebrity golf tournament with Sylvester Stallone's mother who bought the two llamas for his birthday. She delivered them to his home in Malibu as reported in Star Magazine.

Sally had the first two llamas certified by the Delta Society as animal assisted therapy llamas: East Fork Narcissus and Stage Stop Larry. They became the 4H llamas for her children. She developed a 4H program (the first) in Colorado for 14 kids which continued for many years. LaRue Johnson from CSU used her herd for research for his vet students. She was the first female president of the Rocky Mountain Llama association and a supporter of the Fairplay Llama race. She became associated with the Organ Donation partnership at that race and provided 30 llamas for them every year. She also founded a race in Cripple Creek, CO called the Red Light Run where she met her Fire Chief husband, Jeff. She was a fiber enthusiast and a founder of the Estes Park Wool Market. She taught many people to spin (including Jeff) all of whom have surpassed her in skill. A teacher before llamas, that has remained her niche. She was the DJ and announcer for Fairplay and many shows around the country. She served on the ILR Board for 10 years. When the ILA disbanded, she organized and transported the records from Colorado to the ILR in Montana. She was a founder of Llamas of Central Colorado which sponsored many of the first shows in Colorado. Jeff was a great superintendent. She held several ALSA judging clinics. She and Jeff volunteered at the Grand Nationals and other shows for years. Sally's children were active in showing, but

she and Jeff prefer to volunteer rather than show. She found it more satisfying to watch her customers win than to beat them in the ring. She occasionally stepped into the ring when called upon to fill classes so exhibitors could get points. Sally's passion for llamas and kids has never waned and she is down to 60-70 llamas (at one point she owned 470). Her father used to say, "This is my daughter, and this is what crazy looks like). She was letting her herd age out, but her 14-year-old grandson has taken an interest, and they now have a young herd which is producing some great babies. Can anyone