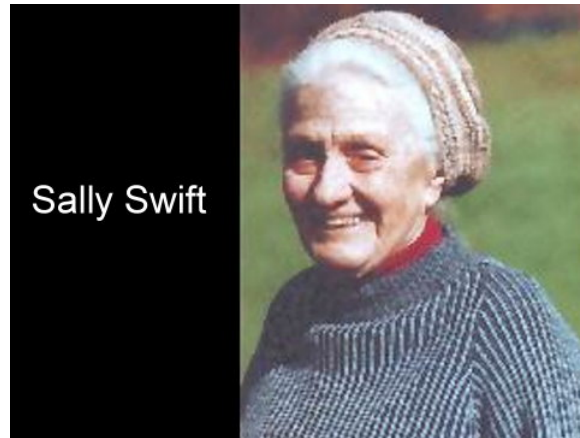




Sally Swift



Sally Swift, founder of Centered Riding® Inc., was born in 1913 and grew up in Hingham, Massachusetts, just south of Boston. Sally died on April 2, 2009, less than three weeks away from her 96th birthday.

At seven years old, Sally developed a severe scoliosis, which affected her daily life and was later instrumental in her development of Centered Riding. After the diagnosis and well into her twenties, she worked with Mabel Ellsworth Todd, author of *The Thinking Body*. Mabel Todd was Sally's first teacher in "body awareness" and encouraged Sally to explore her new awareness. This early training was enhanced when Sally began to study the Alexander Technique™ and applied it to riding. The Alexander Technique™ is a method of re-educating the mind and body towards greater balance and integration with special reference to posture and movement. Sally's work with the Alexander Technique™ enabled her to discard the back brace she had worn for many years. The Alexander work did not change any of her basic principles, but added significantly to the depth and subtlety of her teaching. Sally worked with areas of the body rather than with specific muscles and used a balanced approach, teaching to both sides of the brain.

Sally was home schooled until 7th grade by her loving mother and then attended Milton Academy in Milton Massachusetts for her 7th through 12th grade education. After graduating high school, Sally studied riding with Phyllis Linnington in England and Colonel Guirey of the Boots and Saddle Riding School in New York City and also taught riding at various private schools. She also rode with Vladimir S. Littauer.

Although discouraged by Mabel Todd from going on to college, Sally was determined to change her career, since at that time riding was seen as being taught by "hard-boiled spinsters" or grooms with no education. Not wanting to be viewed as a "hard-boiled spinster" and having the benefit of a wonderful early education, Sally attended the University of Massachusetts from 1943 to 1945 and then transferred to Cornell University. She graduated from Cornell University in 1947 with a B.S. in agriculture. She worked for 21 years at the Holstein Association of America located in Brattleboro, Vermont, retiring in 1975. During those years, Sally was active in the Brattleboro Riding Club and the Brattleboro Dressage Show. Under her leadership, the Brattleboro Riding Club Horse Show grew to be the largest single day horse show in the United States.

Upon her retirement, Sally began teaching riding to a few friends and used concepts of her work with Mabel Todd to develop the Four Basics of Centered Riding. This was the beginning of Centered Riding®. Sally never advertised her work; her teaching reputation simply spread by word of mouth. Before long, she was going up and down the East coast with her teachings. In the early 1980's, when Sally was in her early seventies, she began traveling to other locations in the U.S. and to Canada, Australia and Europe. As she developed her techniques and taught people about the Four Basics of Centered Riding, the demand for Centered Riding clinics and Instructor clinics blossomed. Centered Riding Inc. has since become a worldwide organization with members all across the United States, Canada, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, England, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, The Netherlands, Norway, Scotland, Sweden, and Switzerland. Clinics are now in other countries, and interest in Centered Riding has been expressed in Argentina, Egypt, Iran, Israel, Mexico, South Africa, among other places.

Sally Swift's book **Centered Riding**, now a classic, was published in 1985 and celebrated its twentieth year in print in 2005. It's been translated into fifteen languages and has sold over 800,000 copies worldwide. In 1986, Sally produced two videos **Centered Riding 1** and **Centered Riding 2**, which are now in DVD format. A second book, **Centered Riding 2: Further Exploration** was published in 2002 and is following in its predecessor's footsteps with nine foreign language editions and 100,000 copies sold worldwide. Sally Swift's books and videos are available in many tack shops or can be ordered by contacting the Centered Riding Office.

The Instructor Program which Sally developed is now taught by the Level IV Instructors who apprenticed directly with Sally (1986 - 1991) or in recent years, who apprenticed with Level IV instructors. For more information about Centered Riding® Instructors and how to become one, please visit the Centered Riding website at www.centeredriding.org.

Recognized for her influence in riding, Sally Swift received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Riding Instructor Certification program in 1997 and in 2006, at the age of 93, Sally was inducted into the United States Dressage Foundation's Hall of Fame, an honor reserved for those persons who have had a major impact on horseback riding. In June of 2008, she was presented with the seventh annual Equine Industry Vision Award by Pfizer Animal Health and American Horse Publications, an award that recognizes innovation, ingenuity and service across the entire equine market. In January of 2010, Sally Swift was posthumously awarded the United States Equestrian Federation Pegasus Award, a very prestigious award recognizing an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the equestrian sport.

Sally always had young people in her life and remained young in her thinking all her life. Sally could relate to anyone, and despite her fame, breadth of knowledge and accomplishments, greeted all who journeyed down her path with warmth and humbleness. She never elevated herself above others, but opened her heart with acceptance and friendship. All who came to know Sally personally or came to "know her" through her work, felt as though they had lost a dear friend. This is the enduring gift Sally Swift left for the many people who knew and loved her.

Centered Riding is the enduring gift she left for the world.

