

TEAM VALOR FAMILIES SHARE RACING THROUGH GENERATIONS KATHERINE DILLON, 88, PEG FUREY, 96, HELPED INSTILL SONS' PASSION DAVE DILLON AND TOM FUREY ARE BOTH PARTNERS IN ANIMAL KINGDOM

Beyond the horses, Team Valor International is blessed with strong human pedigrees that have linked a love for racing through multiple generations. Two of Animal Kingdom's partners, Dave Dillon and Tom Furey, are prime examples.

Dave's mother, Katherine, has attended almost every edition of the Preakness Stakes since 1945. Of course, that includes the 2011 Preakness when Animal Kingdom finished a close second after winning the Kentucky Derby.

Tom's mother, Peg, is just as dedicated to Saratoga Race Course—she has attended live racing at the Spa for 56 consecutive years and is surely well ahead of the house, considering she is a crack handicapper at age 96.

Mrs. Dillon, an 88-year-old mother of 10, first went to the Preakness when she was in college and made it a family tradition. She has lived in the same house near Woodley Park in Washington D.C. since 1957 and said her children, particularly sons Dave, Mark and James, relished every chance they got to go to the races at Bowie, Laurel and Pimlico.

"I remember taking Dave and Mark to Bowie when they were young boys," she said. "We won a big exacta and they were so excited. We came home and threw the money up on the bed. It's family fun, you know. We never took it too seriously, just fun, some great recreation."

"It's been at least 50 years that I have had Preakness tickets—always the same ones, we have a box outside which is a lot of fun. Over the years the kids that were interested have come. We used to have a rule that they had to be at least in the fifth grade before they could be invited. It's always been a big family day, a big outing. I will say that Pimlico has changed very, very little. The neighborhood is still exactly the same, and they always put trash cans out to reserve a parking space for a fee. We take a picnic and have a great family outing. Dave and two of his brothers are the most interested. The others got very into it when they learned that Dave had a piece of Animal Kingdom."

Tom Furey said his mother was initially upset when he came home from college in 1963 as the owner of half a Standardbred racehorse, given to him as a graduation present. Within 3 weeks, the horse won a race at the Saratoga harness track.



Katherine Dillon visited Animal Kingdom at Palm Meadows Training Center last month. Her son, Dave (background), is one of the Kentucky Derby winner's partners.

“She ran down to the winner’s circle and said, ‘Boy, look at my horse,’” Tom said with a laugh. “That hooked all three of us, my dad, my mom and me. We’ve been in the business ever since.”



Peg and Tom Furey at Saratoga last summer, her 56th consecutive season at the Spa.

“She watched the race at home with her niece and one of her caregivers and she went nuts,” he said. “She was saying, ‘My horse won the Derby.’”

Mrs. Furey does have a horse of her own as a partner in Tuttipaesi, a stakes winner for the all-women Valor Ladies partnership. She bets and watches the races through her Twin Spires account. Tom’s wife, Julie, also is one of Tuttipaesi’s partners after getting hooked herself following Animal Kingdom’s Derby.

Mrs. Dillon, with her decades watching races, quickly shook off Animal Kingdom’s second-place finish in the Grade 1 Gulfstream Park Turf Handicap last month in his final start in the United States, confident that it was a good prep for the \$10-million Dubai World Cup on March 30.

“All along, I felt like it was a good competitive workout for him,” she said. “I sure would have loved to have seen him win, but it was good prep to send him on his way.”

Mrs. Dillon, Dave and his wife, Cindy, spent some quality time with the big colt at Palm Meadows Training Center the next morning.

“That was a real thrill, the best part of the weekend for me, to go to the country club of horses, as I call it,” said Mrs. Dillon, who was a partner along with Dave in Really Polish, a multiple stakes winner and third-place finisher in the 1998 Kentucky Oaks for Team Valor. “People that go to the races don’t get that view, they just don’t know how much is involved, how much hard work and dedication it is. That was great fun to be able to see that environment.

“Animal Kingdom sure knows he’s the king of the walk there.”

Animal Kingdom will head abroad as the king of a long list of racing memories for many Team Valor families, including the Dillons and Fureys.

Soon, the Fureys began making regular trips from Pittsfield, Massachusetts, to the Thoroughbred races at Saratoga. The track is about an hour and a half from Pittsfield, where she lives in the same house where she was born. Last year, Peg and Tom Furey made every Monday card during the Saratoga meet.

“She plays the triple all the time—she usually boxes four horses and hits more often than not,” he said.

Tom Furey said it was a familiar reaction after Animal Kingdom’s big triumph at Churchill Downs.