

# Jermo Reese

**Author:** Emily Libecap,  
Graduate Student Intern

**Places:** Lexington, Kentucky;  
Los Angeles, California

**Birth:** July 22, 1979 **Death:**

**Professions:** Equine Youth Nonprofit  
Founder, Stable Worker



## Childhood Introduction to Horse Work

Jermo Reese credits his early introduction to the horse world to his grandfather, Francis “Frank” Wilson. When he was only eight years old, Reese began working with his grandfather at Jonabell Farm in Lexington, Kentucky. Reese cleaned stables with him as a way to help and spend time with his beloved grandfather.<sup>1</sup>

## A Grandfather’s Influence

Reese’s admiration of his grandfather stayed with him even after he left the horse industry. Wilson had worked at Jonabell Farm his whole life. He held several jobs there and also worked at Keeneland as a handler during the many sales each year. He was such a regular feature that his seat became known as “Frankie’s Corner.” Keeneland installed a plaque there in his honor. This would become an inspiration to Reese.<sup>2</sup>

## Reawakening a Passion

Reese pursued a career in photography and moved to Southern California in 2004. While living there, he missed working with horses. He found a local family who needed help taking care of their horses and began working for them on the side. Horses in urban Southern California have a much more confined environment than in Kentucky, which shocked Reese. He felt disheartened that these horses he intended to work with had been neglected. Reese used the skills his grandfather had taught him to gain the horses’ trust and train them. By restoring these horses to health, Reese realized he wanted to return to working with horses in some way.<sup>3</sup>

# Return to Kentucky

In 2015, after his grandfather's death, Reese moved back to Kentucky to take care of his grandmother. Shortly after moving back, he saw a local news program about youth gang members. This gave him the idea to combine his love of horses with youth outreach.<sup>4</sup>

## Frankie's Corner Little Thoroughbred Crusade

Reese started a nonprofit organization and named it in honor of his grandfather. Establishing Frankie's Corner Little Thoroughbred Crusade (FCLTC) was difficult. Reese persisted. He asked local businesses and organizations for partnerships to launch the nonprofit. In a nod to his grandfather, Reese based the program's logo on an oil painting that Reese's uncle made of Wilson.

By participating in the FCLTC program, children learn to work with horses. They begin with the basics of stable cleaning and maintenance. Eventually, they learn to ride.<sup>[4]</sup> Reese pointed out that Kentucky is the horse capital of the world, but most children in the Lexington area lack the means to get involved with horses. This program is one way Reese can close that gap. Reese received an award for his work from Phoenix Rising Lex. Humbled by the award, Reese claims, "This is really not about me . . . this is about living the legacy of my grandfather."<sup>5</sup>

## Sources

(Research Note: In 2021, Jeremy "Jermo" Reese legally changed his name to Jermo Reese)

"About FCLTC." n.d. Frankie's Corner Little Thoroughbred Crusade. Accessed January 6, 2020. [www.frankiescorner.org/our-story-fcltc](http://www.frankiescorner.org/our-story-fcltc).

Kennedy, Kristen. 2018. "Nonprofit in Lexington Teaching Kids about the Horse Industry." WKYT. June 6, 2018. [www.wkyt.com/content/news/Nonprofit-in-Lexington-teaching-kids-about-the-horse-industry-484677161.html](http://www.wkyt.com/content/news/Nonprofit-in-Lexington-teaching-kids-about-the-horse-industry-484677161.html).

Reese, Jermo, interview by Yvonne Giles. May 18, 2019, Chronicle of African Americans in the Horse Industry Oral History Project, Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky Libraries. Listen Online

Reese, Jermo, interview by Cynthia S. Maharrey. July 8, 2019, Chronicle of African Americans in the Horse Industry Oral History Project, Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky Libraries. Listen Online

## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Reese Interview by Giles.

<sup>2</sup>Reese Interview by Giles.

<sup>3</sup>Reese Interview by Giles.

<sup>4</sup>"About FCLTC."

<sup>5</sup>Reese Interview by Giles.