



Photo Courtesy of The American Quarter Horse Journal
Registered Black Angus cattle get a taste of hay from Mollie Taylor-Stevenson, Jr.

Elicious Scott, Jr., joins her in that interest.

They say, "A lot of people in Texas haven't seen black cowboys, and fewer have seen women in the Western heritage. I want to change that. In many of the history books, there are no pictures of black cowboys and Mexican charros. The truth is that we had a part in settling the West."

The American Cowboy Museum is helping set that record straight. They encourage contributions of family artifacts, which will be displayed and honored at the museum. "We welcome any historic items," Mollie, Jr. says.

The Museum receives support from the Cultural Arts Council and some Texas businesses, and always seeks new sources of support in order to share their wealth of information with more young people. To obtain further information, contribute, or book traveling programs, phone (713) 433-4441 or (713) 731-2204.

The ranch also supports 4-H members in elementary and middle school and youth in FFA by providing prize-winning animals. Mollie, Jr. is eager to give visitors a tour demonstrating the many vocational choices in agri-business, hoping to encourage other Blacks to maintain ownership of their property.

Mollie, Jr. graduated from the

same Houston high school as her mother, then majored in business at Texas Southern University. For 15 years she worked away from the home ranch, as a professional model, dazzlingly statuesque at six foot.

But the heritage drew her back. She's a

journalist, and in addition to her constant work through the Museum, she volunteers for various black trail riding associations, rodeo associations and cowboy events, and the Black Landowners Association.

Mollie, Sr. is a world traveler who has instilled a love of traveling and a thirst for knowledge in her children. She has visited exotic lands like Egypt, and spent weeks touring South America by motor home.

The myriads of volunteer activities both women pursue have drawn respect and admiration from people of many races and all walks of life.

The Black Professional Cowboys & Cowgirls Association says, "Both Mollie, Sr. and Jr. are icons and concrete pillars in the African American Western Community. . . They have unselfishly given their time, talents and treasures to ensure our youth is educated on the importance of agriculture, animal husbandry and western heritage."

James L. Adkins, Mayor of the City of Kyle calls them "outstanding ranching ladies."

Vivian Ayres of the New American Museum for Art & History of the Southwest calls Mollie, Jr, "the very bulwark of African American awareness of their participation in 'American Westering' in the Houston area." Interestingly, Mrs. Ayres is the mother of Debbie Allen,

choreographer, Tex Ayres, musician and Phylicia Rashad, better known to millions as "Mrs. Bill Cosby" on The Bill Cosby Show.

"They came to the ranch a lot when they were children," Mollie, Jr. recalls. "Vivian encouraged them each to use their imaginations, follow their dreams . . . and look what they've done with their lives!"

She's undeniably proud of the part the ranch and its environment played in their formative years, as it continues to do for thousand of Houston children annually.

Honoring the two Mollie's, Mayor Carolyn Jones of the City of Kendleton said, "These ladies are the epitome of western pioneer heritage, as well as a proud representation of the African-American spirit. While maintaining their history, they continue to be examples of pride and dedication to young and old alike."

The Executive Director of the Texas Trailblazer Preservation Association says, "Both Mollie and her daughter are 'Texas Trailblazers', women who are dedicated not only to preserving the 100+ year history of their own ranch but preserving the unique history of African American cowboys."

Judy Dearing, Administrative Assistant to the Director of the National Cowboy Hall of Fame says, "I was impressed with their love of the west, their desire to inspire youngsters in learning about cowboys and their great heritage, and their dedication to preserving the rich history of the black cowboy."

In 2001 the two Mollie's became the first living African-Americans to be inducted into the National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame in Fort Worth, Texas. Curator Jennifer Nielsen said, "We are very proud to have Mollie Stevenson Jr. and Mollie Stevenson Sr. in the Hall of Fame. They are both outstanding examples of the cowgirl spirit and are very deserving of the honor." They are also outstanding examples of the ranching heritage of Texas and the West!