

MEET *Melanie*
RAINEY, RPR ...
and HORSE FARMER

By Ana Fatima Costa



Jessica Farren Photography

Originally from Texarkana, Texas, Melanie Rainey, RPR, is a Washington State Certified Court Reporter (CCR) and proud owner of a horse farm 34 miles north of Seattle.

Her love of horses began one Christmas when her parents surprised Melanie and her sister with a horse, Pixie. She taught herself to ride at age five and grew up riding Western — trails, barrels, rodeo, and 4-H.

Her father worked at paper mills throughout the South, and Melanie worked with him over Christmas and summer vacations to help pay for school. This is where she developed her strong work ethic and the manual labor skills she uses on her farm.

When Melanie was 19, attending the University of Southwestern Louisiana, her dad accepted a job in Washington State, and the family moved. She initially intended to pursue a psychology major at the University of Washington, but a chance encounter with a friendly court reporter at a ski shop in Sandpoint, Idaho, changed her life path. The reporter's grandmother lived near Green River College outside Seattle. Melanie moved in with "Grams" and registered in Green River's court reporting and captioning program.

She passed Washington's CCR exam in 1997 and the RPR in 2000. A year later, Melanie met Lisa



Alexa Schmidt Photography

Buell, RPR, CRR, owner of Buell Realtime Reporting, LLC, and has been with the company since.

Yet something was missing; The only time Melonie had not worked with horses was the seven years she attended Green River. Her career now established, she explored working with horses again, visited a farm, and fell in love with dressage.

“The woman who owned the farm had imported a beautiful dressage horse from Germany,” said Melonie. “I had never seen a horse move like that and burst into tears. You know when you see something so beautiful, you get emotional? That was it: I was hooked.”

Melonie and her then-fiancé, a woodworker, visited an 11-acre farm in Tulalip, Wash. It had everything they were looking for — a large riding arena, 15-stall boarding barn, and a

shop for him — so they bought the farm and had a beautiful country wedding. Things did not work out as planned, but there was a happy ending: Because of her thriving court reporting career (even amid a recession), Melonie was able to buy her ex-husband out and became the sole owner.

She named it White Birch Farm because she loves white birch trees — their beautiful bark, how their leaves shimmer in the breeze, and the feeling of peace they evoke. Melonie and her

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dad planted several birch trees along the driveway leading to the barn.

For a short time after Facebook launched in 2004, Melonie owned Riding Couture, an equestrian design and fashion company offering unique products she designed. She joined the popular social media site to market her business. It was an inspiring and exciting time in her life.

Her White Birch Farm Facebook business page describes the farm as a “Gentleman’s Farm” that boards horses, offers riding lessons focusing on basic horsemanship and dressage, and provides peace of mind. This is the sole source of all her horse farm business and the perfect showcase to share photos of the land, animals (horses, ponies, chickens, roosters, turkeys, goats, pigs, and peacocks), garden, flowers, barns, and arena.

A lifelong equestrienne, Melonie has trained and competed through the Intermediate I level of dressage and enjoys teaching and helping others connect with their horse. Dressage is like dancing: to be a good partner, you need to find that quiet place you only go with your best friend, hold hands, feel, and dance.

Melonie envisions also offering weddings and an Airbnb at the farm, but her bigger dream is the farm becoming a sanctuary for aging and elderly horses, where they can have a happy life until they pass. Her deep love of horses allows her to see them as sentient beings — not just workhorses, sources of income, and animals to ride.

Another dream is to write a true children’s story about a little girl, Zoe, whose grandmother rents Melonie’s barn apartment. When Zoe moved in at the age of three, she didn’t speak, look anyone in the eye, and was develop-

mentally disabled. Now six, Zoe is talking, running, riding horses, checking on feed and water buckets, and developing a strong work ethic. She has blossomed — spending time outside with the animals, plants, nature, and helping Melonie with chores.

“Observing Zoe’s growth the past three years, I am aware she watches me and considers me a role model — a job I take very seriously,” said Melonie. “Knowing this makes me want to be a better person.”

Melonie grew up in the Baptist and Catholic church and studied Buddhism for a short while. Owning White Birch Farm has deepened her spirituality. She says: “Nature is my religion. Nature is flourishing now during the pandemic. The earth needs a break — from us. It is just as much a part



Jessica Farren Photography

of this world as we are. We don’t own this space. We need plants and animals to survive. We don’t exist without nature. We have to stop and recognize that, truly, or we’re going to be in big trouble. Mother Nature can put a stop to things, pronto.”

For most people, working two full-time jobs is daunting, but not for Melonie — she loves them both. Since the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, she has been happily capturing the record while sitting in her home office. Previously, her commute to and from Seattle and environs took four hours. Now she uses that time to work with the horses, tend the farm and gardens, or just sit back and relax in gratitude for the career that supports her farm, freedom, and lifestyle.

“My court reporting career has been my Dream Maker,” says Melonie. “It has given me the means to this lifestyle and has shown me that I can do it all on my own.”

Ana Fatima Costa, a retired RPR and reporter certified in California, is an author, coach, and speaker.