

Galbreath Award Winner - Brian Derrick Mehl

The Galbreath Award is presented annually to an individual who has, in a normal course of ethical and entrepreneurial business practices, moved his or her segment of the equine industry in a positive direction. There is no doubt that Brian Mehl has done that for South Africa and for the entire sport of pari-mutuel racing. The University of Louisville is proud to award the 16th annual "John W. Galbreath Award for Outstanding Entrepreneurship in the Equine Industry" to Brian Derrick Mehl.

There is no other jurisdiction in the world in which the pari-mutuel horse racing industry has been transformed as positively over the last decade as South Africa. While the challenges wrought by off-site wagering and the international simulcasting market have affected racing everywhere, only South Africa has completely revolutionized its business model and worked aggressively to shape the industry's future internationally. The unquestioned leader of these achievements has been Brian Derrick Mehl.

The tradition of Thoroughbred racing in South Africa was local and autonomous racing clubs that operated solely for sport rather than profit. However, there was a worldwide trend during the 20th century toward regulation of gaming, which gave governments everywhere, no less South Africa, a chance to become primary beneficiaries of pari-mutuel wagering. This occurred regardless of the business structure of the tracks.

By the 1990s, it had become evident that control of South African racing by government would never enable the industry to meet the challenges from newly legalized gaming competition and the rapidly changing market dynamics of simulcasting. In Gauteng, the wealthiest province of South Africa, crowds and handle at racing clubs were in severe decline. Leaders of the provincial government, seeing tax revenues decline as well, began seeking alternatives, even "privatization."

The tale of how initial exploration into privatizing proprietary racing clubs in a state-regulated sport culminated in the development of a large publicly traded company called Phumelela Gaming and Leisure Limited is fascinating. The better clubs became assets of the new firm, while the others were shut down in exchange for appropriate fractions of overall ownership. The negotiations among the clubs, the owners, other associations, and provincial governments were complicated and tedious, but results were positive.

Early in these negotiations, Brian Mehl, a longtime horse owner, and a business executive whose company had been sold not long before, emerged, and was given a key role in the process. By 1997, under Mehl's leadership, a Memorandum of Understanding with the support of more than 90 percent of the members of the individual clubs was signed with the Gauteng Government. Its main achievements were creation of a single corporate entity and a reduction in the pari-mutuel tax. By 2002, the new firm was listed on the JSE, South Africa's stock exchange.

Since then, expansion of the racing industry in South Africa has been impressive. Phumelela, of which Mehl became the chief executive, has been highly successful in its efforts to expand the sport of racing, with such innovations as fixed-odds wagers, which have been popular with casino and sports-betting fans. It has also reached out to send signals internationally. It has created a joint venture that has secured the international simulcasting and pooling rights to 29 leading tracks in the UK.

Finally, Phumelela has been successful in negotiating a groundbreaking royalty-payment contract with Betfair, the world's largest and most aggressive betting exchange. This contract, which has required Betfair to acknowledge that the signals of Phumelela's racing products are its own intellectual property, has the potential to create an important international legal precedent for dealing with racing images.

Steward CE Program Held at Delaware Park

Delaware Park was the site of the March UoL Stewards and Judges Continuing Education program. Fifty-one accredited stewards and judges attended the two-day session representing racing jurisdictions from the U.S., Canada, South Korea, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago. Delaware Commission Chairman and current ARCI Chairman, Bernard J. Daney welcomed the officials during the opening session.

A variety of the topics were discussed, including the Jockey Club's InCompass database program used to track a horse's movements and its eligibility. Pre and post-race medication issues were covered by Dr. John Peters, DTRC veterinarian, Mid Atlantic regulatory veterinarian, Dr. Jay Baldwin, and private practitioner, Dr. Celeste Kunz. Pete Lang, Thoroughbred Racing Protective Bureau (TRPB) and Standardbred Investigative Services (SIS) spoke on security issues and J. Curtis Linnell, also of the TRPB, discussed wagering trends and other changes in pari-mutuel protocol. Special guest, Art McNally, director of officials for the National Football League discussed officiating in the league, instant replay, and integrity issues and their similarities to horse racing.

Additionally, films of racing infractions were reviewed in small groups after which the attendees participated in a discussion session led by Virginia Executive Secretary, Stan Bowker, Delaware Harness Racing Commission Administrator, Hugh J. Gallagher, and DTRC Executive Director, John F. Wayne.

Ranch Horse Classics Repeat Winner – Clark Bradley

Clark Bradley, Findlay, Ohio, repeated his 2005 Championship win in the University of Louisville's ninth annual Ranch Horse Classics. The riding instructor from the University of Findlay took a first place in the conformation class, second place in the finals for western pleasure, working ranch horse and ranch roping. His Quarter Horse gelding, Zantastic Hickory, also earned a fourth place in working cow horse to win his second Ranch Horse Classics Trophy Saddle.

A pair of trophy spurs and the Reserve Championship went to Steve Brown, director of western riding for the University of Findlay. His Quarter Horse gelding, HVR Playboy, won blue ribbons in the finals for western pleasure and working ranch horse, a third place in working cow horse and fourth in ranch roping.

Entries from seven states competed in five classes to test the all-around talents of western cow horses. The show was held at the Kentucky Fair & Expo Center, Louisville, KY, on April 1st.

Bozo Rogers, Lipan, Texas, served as judge.

Students from the Department of Equine Business at the University of Louisville produce the Ranch Horse Classics as an experience in event management.

Sponsors for the event were American Livestock Insurance Company, Breeders' Cup, KEEP, Pepsi, and Southern States.

EIP Graduate Update

World Equestrian Games Hires Hinkle as Chief Administrative Officer

Rob Hinkle, a 1994 graduate of the Equine Industry Program has been hired as the Chief Administrative Officer by the World Games 2010 Foundation, Inc., the organization responsible for putting on the FEI World Equestrian Games. He will be in charge of the day-to-day planning and operations of the 2010 FEI Games to be held in Lexington, Kentucky.

"It is a thrill to be a part of something as prestigious as the 2010 FEI World Equestrian Games," said Hinkle. "I think my experiences at the Kentucky Horse Park and Walt Disney World give me the background to make this event a success in Kentucky and for the United States. I look forward to working with the Foundation, the US Equestrian Federation, and other groups that will help make the event a success."

The 2010 FEI World Equestrian Games will mark the first time the event has been held outside of Europe. The event is comprised of seven world championships held at the same time and the 2010 event also marks the first time they will be held at the same location. More than 500,000 spectators are expected to attend.

Rob lives in Lexington with his wife and two children.

2006 Graduate Information Now On-line

The Equine Industry Program is proud to introduce our graduates from the class of 2006.

Our graduates are valued associates in an array of equine enterprises, such as the California Thoroughbred Breeders Association, the Florida Thoroughbred Breeders & Owners Association, Bloodstock Research Information Services, Inc., The Jockey Club, Equibase, Churchill Downs, Lone Star Park, Monmouth Park, Indiana Downs, Bradley Thoroughbred Brokerage, International Racehorse Transport, TVG, Crestwood Farm, Lane's End Farm, Mill Ridge Farm, U.S. Equestrian Federation, the Kentucky Horse Park, and the World Games 2010 Foundation, Inc. They hold positions in many areas, including marketing, simulcasting, research, sales, computer software development, and administration.

You can read a brief profile and expected graduation date for each of our degree candidates with links to individual resumes. Go to the EIP website at <http://business.louisville.edu/eip> and then scroll down and click on graduates.