

# Famous Forever: The Lives And Times Of Horse Show Trophies

*There's a story behind each of these prestigious awards.*

Mollie Bailey

**M**OST TROPHIES ONLY MAKE an appearance once a year, but that brief photo opportunity reflects a year's worth of organization and hard work. Historic horse shows often have exquisite collections of awards, and keeping them organized and ready to go isn't easy.

No one's better suited for the task than Johanna Hall Glass. A meticulous organizer with a great memory for the history of horse sport, Glass got her start typing the packing lists for the trophies alongside her mother. Now she serves as the co-chair of the Devon Horse Show (Pa.) Trophy Committee, and she knows each of the show's 170 trophies inside and out.

"They're works of art," said Glass, of Kennett Square, Pa. "We have magnificent statues and bronzes, small

beautiful pitchers and everything in between. One of the great things about these trophy collections is how diverse they are."

Perpetual trophies stay in a show's collection indefinitely, while challenge trophies may be retired. The specifications for retiring a trophy vary, but commonly, the award must be won three times by either the same horse and owner, or the same owner, for permanent possession.

"Nowadays that the horses are sold more and more, it's not too often that a trophy is retired," said Joe Pugliese, longtime Trophy Committee member of the National Horse Show. "Often when a winner earns a trophy they'll chose to reissue it and donate it back to the horse show."



## HORSE SHOW ISSUE

For example, the Congressman's Challenge trophy, awarded to the winner of the puissance at the Washington International Horse Show (D.C.), has been retired and re-donated three times: once by Mr. and Mrs. Harry Gill, once by Daydream Associates, and once by McLain Ward.

**"Nowadays that the horses are sold more and more, it's not too often that a trophy is retired."**

*—Joe Pugliese*

If a retired trophy isn't re-donated, the donor of the original trophy or the individual who retired the trophy may be invited to provide a replacement, depending on the show, and of course outside individuals occasionally approach the show wishing

*Right:* At nearly 3 feet tall, the Wanamaker Trophy, awarded to the winner of Devon's Idle Dice Memorial Stake, requires some help from a bench pressing presenter to award.

*Below:* The Devon Horse Show has 170 trophies in its historic collection.



*(Brenda Carpenter Photos)*



(James Shambhu/International Museum of the Horse Photo)



to donate an award. Donors may be given specific guidelines about height and weight of the award, but generally there's plenty of leeway with trophy design. Each trophy is appraised and insured, with values running the gamut from a few hundred dollars to low five figures.

## Where Do They Come From?

Trophies can come from anywhere. Some donors have family heirlooms or antiques converted into awards. Committee members regularly steer excited would-be donors to a major jewelry house like Tiffany & Co. or Cartier, or to a specific silversmith. Over the years, a few trophies may be lost or stolen, but many historic shows still have trophies from their original collection.

**"A lot of times the trophies represent something really emotional, especially if it's in memory of a person."**

*—Jennifer Glass*

The oldest trophy in the National Horse Show's collection isn't awarded anymore but found its way back to the show after a long hiatus. It's an ornate sterling piece, created using repoussé and chasing by Whiting MFG in 1855 and originally awarded to the best four-in-hand team. Pierre Lorillard IV, largely credited with inventing the tuxedo and popularizing that attire at the National Horse Show, won the trophy in 1885 in the show's third year.

The so-called Lorillard Trophy disappeared from the

Jacqueline Kennedy presented the Washington International Horse Show with the gold Tiffany & Co.-designed President's Cup Perpetual Cup in 1961. Awarded to the winner of the President's Cup CSI-W, it's the only trophy known to have the presidential seal.

The oldest trophy awarded at the National Horse Show, the Pierre Lorillard Trophy, has been in the collection since 1885.

National's collection for years, until Hank Collins, former chair of the show, stumbled across it in the 1980s. While Collins, an antique enthusiast, can't remember if it appeared at an auction or sale, he made sure to get it right back to the National's collection. Coaching found its way back on the prize list when the show moved to the Meadowlands in New Jersey, and the trophy was briefly awarded again. These days it's part of the collection of unawarded trophies, joined by several pony hunter trophies assigned to outdated divisions.

When individuals donate trophies, they are generally invited—but not required—to pay an annual endowment fee. That contribution may help support the upkeep of the trophy or cover the smaller keeper trophies that winners take home. Some donors will present trophies themselves, other times it's the division sponsor.

"A lot of times the trophies represent something really emotional, especially if it's in memory of a person," said Jennifer Glass, (no relation to Johanna) who's in charge of the trophies at Washington International and Capital Challenge (Md.). "When the family comes into the ring to present that award, they'll usually be great, but you can tell it's a bittersweet time for them. It's such a wonderful way to honor someone's memory."



(Diana DeRosa Photo)

But presentations don't always go as planned. At the 2009 Rolex FEI World Cup Show Jumping Final in Las Vegas, Meredith Michaels-Berberbaum hoisted that trophy above her head for a photo opportunity, then her horse spun, and Michaels-Berberbaum had to toss it into the dirt.

"You have to be savvy when you're presenting," said Jennifer, Bokeelia, Fla. "Even when they're properly stored and cared for, sometimes a handle will fall off, or something won't be right, so you just do the best you can and make the trophies look the best they can. It's show business, and it's live."

## Coddling The Trophies

Despite best efforts to coddle trophies, handles inevitably fall off loving cups, statues detach from bases, silver plate wears away, and reverse bowls dent. Once the show shuts down, there are plenty of repairs to be made, and the entire fleet also needs engraving. Most trophies at championship competitions are hand engraved, a time-consuming and dying art, but some are machine engraved, a process which has become more sophisticated in recent years. Some trophies are engraved directly, but many trophies—especially older ones—have plaques on the plinth.

## The Story Behind The Trophy: Shenandoah Sundowner

It's tough enough to win a championship at a show like the Washington International (D.C.) once, let alone the three times it typically takes to retire a challenge trophy. Add in the fact that many trophies may only be retired if they are won three times by the same horse and owner, and it's become pretty unusual for anyone to leave a show with a historic trophy in their trailer.

It took Shenandoah Sundowner four tries before he finally took the Tidbit Challenge Trophy home. Molly Ashe rode the pony to his first Washington title in 1985, for Sabina Wister. Then the pony moved west, where he split his time between winning with Megan Johnstone and Lauren Hough and jumping out of his paddock. Johnstone picked up the reserve title at Washington in 1986 by a narrow margin.

Two weeks before Christmas in 1987, Allyson Coluccio, who had trained Shenandoah Sundowner (Cowboy Joe—Farnley Daylight) when Ashe was aboard, received a phone

call offering her the chance to buy the pony. He'd hit his late teens, developed a notorious cribbing habit (Coluccio had to bring a 4x4 to the Pennsylvania National for him to crib on to keep him calm) and had a host of pet peeves that made him a tricky keeper. But the timing was right.

"I'd just had a baby eight weeks earlier, and I was entirely emotional and crazy," said Coluccio, Boca Raton, Fla. "I just knew I needed the pony. I knew that pony, and I understood him. It was way too much money, and when I had him vetted out there the results showed that his old suspensory injury had calcified. When he got off the truck he looked like a furry old goat, but it didn't matter."

It was the right decision. That pony would serve as the perfect leadline, walk-trot and short stirrup pony once that newborn son, Evan, turned 3. Meanwhile, the likes of Corinne Lindner, Blake Lindner and Liza Towell Boyd showed him in the medium division, with Boyd riding him to his second Washington title in 1991.

At the age of 7, Evan won his first medium pony award at Washington aboard Shenandoah Sundowner in 1995 and repeated the win in 1997. The pony was 27 when he won at Washington that year, and that marked his last turn around the show ring, as Allyson immediately retired him.

When it came time to design a new trophy for the show, Allyson knew just what she wanted to do. "Sunny" had a best friend: a feline named Orange Cat who followed him around the farm for 14 or 15 years. Orange Cat was the same color as Sunny, with a white splotch on his head similar to Sunny's star. That cat perched on the side of Sunny's favorite cribbing window, followed him around in this field and sat in his stall as he ate his breakfast. The trophy pays homage to Sunny and his best pal. Allyson had several bronzes made, one for the trophy, one for herself and one for Evan.

"I never fell off that pony," said Evan. "I was doing him in the short stirrup and mediums on him by the time I was 6. I was the only one who could catch him in the field when I was little. He was just the coolest pony ever."

The Shenandoah Sundowner trophy pays homage to a feline who was that pony's best friend.



(Courtesy of the Washington International Horse Show)

Then there's the polishing, which is a huge task unto itself. Devon's trophies are professionally polished, a policy begun after a crew once scratched many of the awards by using terrycloth for the job.

Pugliese, a former buyer for Tiffany & Co. and a silver aficionado, actually looks forward to this stage. "I'm crazy, but silver polishing relaxes me," he said. "It's instant gratification to watch something go from green black to shiny silver." (He uses his bare hands to rub in

the polish, walking around with black hands for days afterward.)

Then the trophies disappear for the year. Most trophies from major competitions live in special storage containers (each of the National's trophies is tucked into a zippered pillow case that protects it from tarnish). They're treated as fine art, locked in secure storage facilities. The Pennsylvania National used to send trophies home with the winners for the year, but tracking down

## The Story Behind The Trophy: Protocol

If history is any indication, it's nearly impossible, in the same year, to make a clean sweep of the championships in any division at the top shows. But Protocol defied those odds, winning regular working hunter titles at Devon (Pa.), Pennsylvania National, Washington International (D.C.) and the National Horse Show (N.J.) all in the same year.

Danny Robertshaw purchased Protocol from Ashley Weaver (now Hodges) as a large junior hunter for student Mardie Faucette. The off-the-track Thoroughbred's main job would be with Faucette, but he shone brightest over the bigger fences.

"During that time courses were based on galloping and a lot of trust, and he was one you could put your reins up on

the neck when you came out of a turn and not touch them again until you landed two or three strides after the jump," recalled Robertshaw. "He would just prick his ears and look for the next jumps. He was so handy—he could turn on a dime, jump a huge fence, pull up and trot a fence. And you could really fly to a trot fence. He just looked totally unbeatable. It was a time when everyone knew all the horses' names and where they'd won. He had lots of fans and a great cheering section, and it was just a fun time."

In 1989, the pair won 19 regular working hunter championships, highlighted by their historic sweep at indoors and Devon, and Robertshaw was named *The Chronicle of the Horse* Hunter Horseman of the Year.

That also marked the third year Protocol won the Pin Oak Farms Challenge Trophy at Devon, retiring that award. Faucette immediately called sculptor Sarah Gordon to get to work on a replacement. But according to Devon tradition, when a challenge trophy is retired, the original donor is first offered the honor of replacing it, and sure enough Mr. and Mrs. Albert Williams jumped on the opportunity, commissioning the Second Pin Oak Farms Challenge Trophy. So Faucette found herself with a gorgeous bronze on a marble base and nothing to do with it.

Faucette loved the idea of honoring a horse who followed in Protocol's footsteps, so she, Robertshaw and trainer Ron Danta collaborated with show management to award the trophy to the regular working hunter—now high performance hunter—who accrued the most points at Devon, Pennsylvania National and Washington International. It's not necessarily awarded every year, as the horse must have shown at all three shows to be eligible, but it reads like a who's who of top hunters of the last two decades. Rox Dene, Strapless and Gray Slipper all won the trophy twice. More recently, Lone Star, Rosalynn, Brunello and Garfield have earned the award.

"It's always been such a special way to remember 'Pro,'" said Faucette, who has the Pin Oak Challenge Trophy displayed in her den in Columbia, S.C. "I've had a couple friends win it over the years, which was really special."

In 1989, Protocol and Danny Robertshaw swept the working hunter championships at the biggest competitions on the circuit.



(Parker-Russell/The Book LLC Photo)

# HORSE SHOW ISSUE

The Protocol trophy recognizes the highest-ranked horse in the high performance division at Devon, Pennsylvania National and Washington International. In 2009, Lone Star's rider Hunt Tosh (second left) and owner Douglas Wheeler (right) accepted the award from Betsee Parker (left) and Jennifer Glass.



(All Cook Photo)

the nearly 60 trophies before every competition proved next to impossible.

By and large, the awards just come out for the photo presentations, but there are chances to get a better look at some of them. Many of the U.S. Equestrian Federation's Horse of the Year trophies are on display in their office at the Kentucky Horse Park. During Devon the trophies sit in a window near the Dixon Oval, and this year their Trophy Committee commissioned Brenda Carpenter to photograph their iconic collection. The Pennsylvania National built a display to show off the trophies outside the entry office last year, and another is on the way to show off more of the collection in the sponsor lounge.

Trophy Committee member John Walker personally drove the National Horse Show's collection from their storage facility in New York to the show's new location in Kentucky last year. This year the International Museum of

the Horse, at the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington, will display the show's collection in an exhibit opening in October.

"They're amazing works of art," said Liz Schorb, president of the Pennsylvania National. "There are so many gorgeous, beautiful trophies, and everyone should be able to see them." 🐾

Comments?

[m Bailey@chronofhorse.com](mailto:m Bailey@chronofhorse.com)



**Performance like this requires some serious Ah-gility!**

**Back on Track's Mesh Sheet** goes beyond keeping your horse's body warm; it uses Welltex technology that's proven\* to increase circulation and reduce inflammation, helping your horse go from "Ouch" to "Ah!" after every ride.



**Back on Track®**  
Cares for the wear and tear that naturally occurs with exercise.

**McLain Ward, Olympic rider, two-time Olympic gold team medalist Athens 2004 and Beijing 2008**

"When using the Back on Track blankets, we've noticed a great difference in the horses' backs. We can go longer between the chiropractic treatments. This is a wonderful product that keeps our horses in great shape."

To find your nearest retailer visit [www.backontrackproducts.com](http://www.backontrackproducts.com)  
\*see website for veterinarian test results  
Call 1-888-758-9836 or Email [info@backontrackproducts.com](mailto:info@backontrackproducts.com)