

AMERICAN HACKNEY HORSE SOCIETY HALL OF FAME

LEWIS P. ECKARD

Editor's Note: Lewis Eckard enjoyed the distinction of being inducted into both the American Hackney Horse Society Hall of Fame AND the American Road Horse Association Hall of Fame during the 2015 World's Championship Horse Show. Announcer Peter Fenton read the induction speech on Wednesday, Aug. 26, 2015 and announcer Peter Doubleday read the induction speech on Thursday, Aug. 27, 2015. The following is a composite of those two speeches.

A self-made horseman who began showing with his sisters at the age of 12, Lewis Eckard turned the family's Drowning Creek Farm into a public training stable in 1970. Lewis has spent his career being a versatile horseman, excelling with American Saddlebreds, Hackneys and Standardbreds, as well as being an equitation instructor, noted breeder and horse show judge. The majority of those years have been at the Hildebran, NC, farm that was established by Mr. and Mrs. Landen P. Eckard. He took a short hiatus to help the Art Viles family establish Flying V Farm where among their numerous Saddlebred stars he also introduced them to world-class road horses and ponies.

A Carolina Horseman's Hall of Fame inductee, Lewis has trained, bred and developed champion horses and ponies his entire career for both family and clients. His first world's champion ever was the road pony Puff 'N' Stuff. Hackneys have played a major role in his career since that time. Other road pony greats have included the legendary I've Arrived as well as Razz Ma Tazz, the first pony to win the Road Pony To Wagon World's Championship. He also developed and sold Seize The Moment who went on to win numerous world's titles in the junior exhibitor, amateur and open divisions.

Noted long-tails and cob-tails have also been part of his history at Drowning Creek Farm. "My greatest thrill was Centerfold and mom winning the Hackney Pony World's Grand Championship when he was 18," recalled Lewis.

The following year, 1996, Centerfold and Mrs. Landen P. Eckard won the World's Champion of Champions Amateur Hackney Pony title, adding yet another chapter to his storied career. A few of the other pony stars trained by Lewis include Second Souvenir, Holiday's Candyman, Last Edition, Dun-Haven Crystal King, HTFS Mirror Image and Mark In Time, among others.

While he has thoroughly enjoyed the great ponies and horses under his watch, along with their drivers and riders, it is judging that has given Lewis some of his greatest joy. Lewis has excelled as a USEF judge. He has officiated the World's Championship Horse Show an unprecedented seven times as well as every other major show on multiple continents, multiple times. Holding a card in seven different divisions he has judged the Morgan Grand National a record 12 times.

In addition to judging, Lewis has given back to the sport of showing horses by serving on the USEF Licensed Officials Committee, American Horse Council, as a past UPHA Chapter 12 Chairman, as well as sharing his wisdom with numerous aspiring and established horsemen and women. In 2013, he helped guide Janelle D'Amato Jones and Belle Starr to the World's Champion Roadster To Bike Mare title.

When it comes to road horses Lewis has had some of the greatest speedsters to ever trot a turn. Among this group were the crowd-pleasing world's champions So Lovely, The Auctioneer, Vivacious, D'argent and Free Agent, among others.

If multi-titled World's Grand Champion I've Arrived was the only road pony he had trained it still might be enough to warrant induction into the ARHPA Hall of Fame, however, there have been several others for Lewis. The likes of World's Champion of Champions Seize The Moment, and titleholders Texas Tommy, Razz Ma Tazz (first pony to win the Road Pony Wagon titles), Dun-Haven Grandiose, Feroccia, Hawkeye's Chatter Box, Cherry's Dreamtime, Stargazer's Warrior LF, and Sha Boom all represented this year's inductee in the winner's circle many times over.

"I've always loved Hackneys because of their precise motion," said Eckard. "When it comes to the speedsters when you're young you have a need for speed and I loved the challenge of taking all that power and speed and harnessing it into shape and form.

"Being a professional horseman has been a blessing. If you're doing something you truly love you never really have to go to work."

For his commitment to breeding, developing and showing top ponies, Lewis P. Eckard joins a distinguished group of men and women with induction into the American Hackney Horse Society Hall of Fame. AND For a lifetime of excellence training and showing road horses and ponies, Lewis P. Eckard is the newest member of the ARHPA Hall of Fame.



AHHS President Andy Freseth joined Mrs. Landon Eckard, new inductee Lewis P. Eckard, Lana Ray and Brandon Shepard for Lewis' induction ceremony Wednesday evening.



Lewis Eckard was joined by (L-R) ARHPA President Jon Walker, Gina Lail, Susan Harris, Mrs. Landon Eckard, Dr. Donald Gibson, Carolyn Walker, Brandon Shepard, Lana Ray and James Nichols for his Thursday night induction into the ARHPA Hall Of Fame.

AMERICAN ROAD HORSE AND PONY ASSOCIATION HALL OF FAME