



# JOCKEYS' GUILD HISTORY

The years leading up to 1940 and the formation of an organization which was to speak for jockeys were filled with frustration and pain. There was widespread misuse of power over the jockeys and very few horsemen or track managements were sympathetic to the needs of the riders. In the late 1930's several jockeys held secretive meetings to discuss the idea of raising funds to assist injured or disabled riders and the families of jockeys fatally injured on the racetrack. Some riders were blacklisted and punished when suspected of attending the secret meetings. The actual formation of The Jockeys Community Fund and Guild in 1940 was precipitated by the racing injury of Sammy Renick. When Eddie Arcaro visited Renick, who was recuperating in the hospital from a broken leg, their discussion led to the formation of an organization that would represent the concerns of jockeys.

The organization's constitution stated that to be in good standing in the club, members must hold a valid, unrevoked jockey's license. Dues for the fledgling club were determined to be \$30 per year, plus 25 cents per mount.

The founding fathers of the organization were the leading jockeys of the turf, prominent among them being Eddie Arcaro, Don Meade, John Longden, Lester Haas, Alfred Robertson, Lester Balaski, Charlie Kurtsinger, Carroll Bierman, Ray Workman, Harry Richards, Irving Anderson, John "Red" Pollard, Maurice Peters, George Seabo and Sam Renick.

Objectives of the Jockeys Community Fund and Guild:

1. To accumulate, by contributions and dues from the members, a fund from which would be distributed financial aid.
2. To encourage and foster good morale and good character of its members
3. To support a policy of fair play and honest treatment as to owners, turf clubs and racing clubs
4. To uphold the best interests of horse racing
5. To assist in every honorable way to further the interests of its members
6. To furnish financial aid to any member of the club at such time and in such amounts as he may deserve and within the ability of the club to afford
7. To establish a means whereby members of the club would have available additional assurance of freedom from want and insecurity in the event of misfortune and inability to earn.
8. Any other lawful purpose consistent with the specific objects stated in this article

## **JOCKEYS' GUILD SIGNIFICANT EVENTS OF THE 1940s**

**Presidents:** Harry Richards (1940-1943), Sterling Young (1943-1948), Eddie Arcaro (1946-1961)

**Accomplishments** - Insurance for jockeys purchased by racetracks. Ambulances on site at some racetracks. James "Goggles" McCoy's use of goggles during the 1930s gains wide acceptance during the following decade. Jockey mount fees increased. Post parades shortened during inclement or cold weather. Sanitary conditions in jockeys' room improved.

**Jockey deaths on the racetrack** - Johnny Barba (1940), Earl Dew (1941), Joseph Gianspro (1941), Troy Everett (1941), Hubert Kees (1941), Albert Stuper (1943), Joseph Pannell (1943), Herbert Blackner (1944), Jorge Alfonso (1944), Clinton Jack Harnell (1945), Charles Bianco (1945), Roy Fiocchi (1945), John Beedle (1945), George Woolf (1946), Keith Holman (1946), Cotton Rankin (1946), Orville Craig (1946), George Witmer (1947), Thomas Smith (1947), Eldon Shea (1947), Roy Craig (1947), James McGovern (1947), John O'Day (1948), Benjamin Leggett (1948), Joseph Molbert (1949)

## **JOCKEYS' GUILD SIGNIFICANT EVENTS OF THE 1950s**

**Presidents:** Eddie Arcaro (1949-1961)

**Accomplishments** - Sanitary conditions in the jockeys' rooms improved, uniform apprentice rule adopted, Caliente Safety Helmet introduced, aluminum gooseneck rails first used, film patrol utilized, increased insurance benefits for jockeys.

**Jockey deaths on the racetrack** - Donald Retelle (1950), Richard Rozell (1950), John Glisson (1950), Duane Dolleway (1951), Ralph Fairbanks (1951), Harry Harris (1951), Fred Smith (1951), Benjamin Magnusson (1951), Thomas Martin (1951), Terry Sullivan (1951), Charles Day (1951), Hugh Campbell (1951), Richard McCraw (1951), Richard Thompson (1952), Pedro Huerto (1952), Donald Bennett (1952), Edward Danhauer (1953), David Leicht (1953), William McCadden (1953), Curtis Day (1954), Leio Dwayne Jewell (1954), Leo Gibbons (1955), Leroy Nelson (1956), Charles Guinup (1956), Roger Conlan (1956), Cruz Lopez Figueroa (1956), Raul Contreras (1957), Robert Wilmot (1958), Joseph Snyder (1958), Jack Westrope (1958), Ralph Polichio (1958), Robert Luntz (1959), Frederick Rose (1959), Ricard Ferguson (1959).

## **JOCKEYS GUILD SIGNIFICANT EVENTS OF THE 1960s**

**Presidents** - Eddie Arcaro (1949-1961), Sam Boulmetis, Sr. (1961-1967), William Boland (1967-1969), Walter Blum (1969-1974).

**Accomplishments** - Savings plan for jockeys instituted, jockey mount fees raised, overall improved safety conditions, improved jockeys' quarters, increased insurance benefits for jockeys.

**Jockey deaths on the racetrack** - Charles Boland (1961), Sidney Cole (1961), Roy Gilbert (1961), Ruben Martinez (1962), Richard Lujan (1963), Lester Balaski (1964), Charles Duncan (1964), David Godair (1964), Raymond Bernt (1967), Pierre Biger (1967), George Glasser (1967), Marcos Pena (1967), Leonard Pong (1967), Frederick Robertson (1967), Gary McMullen (1968), Philip Moscariello (1968), Jorge Nunez (1968), Joseph Phillippi (1968), Thomas Smith (1969).

## **JOCKEYS' GUILD SIGNIFICANT EVENTS OF THE 1970s**

**Presidents** – Walter Blum (1969-1971), Bill Shoemaker (1975-1988)

**Accomplishments** – Improved jockeys' quarters, insurance, safety helmets and on-track ambulances, increased health and medical benefits for jockeys, increased mount fees, worker's compensation, on-track first aid, safer racing surfaces and representation for jockeys with management and horsemen's groups.

**Jockey deaths on the racetrack** – Alfonzo Munoz (1971), Flor Garcia (1971), Daniel Castle (1972), Earl Knapp (1973), Jack Robinson (1973), Henry Wajda (1973), John C. Martin (1974), Michael Tornambe (1974), Elizabeth Canning (1974), Donald Brattini (1974), Augustin Sandoval (1974), Johnnie David Hathaway (1974), Kent Roberts (1974), Alvaro Pineda (1975), Wilfrido Osuna (1975), Juan Trujillo Gonzalez (1975), Michael Phelps (1975), Nelma Henderson (1976), Tomas Arroyo, Jr. (1976), Ubaldo Ramos (1978), Robert Pineda (1978), George Gomez (1978), James Smith (1978), Nicnor Navarro (1978), Kenneth Pichette (1979).

## **JOCKEYS' GUILD SIGNIFICANT EVENTS OF THE 1980s**

**Presidents** – Bill Shoemaker (1975-1989), Jerry Bailey (1989-1995)

**Accomplishments** – Increased insurance benefits, elimination of check surcharges at racetracks, insurance policy to cover jockey's personal items at racetracks in case of fire, development of the covered gooseneck safety rail, introduction of the jockey safety vest, defeated the HBPA in lawsuit to increase the losing mount fees for jockeys, forced HBPA to provide Worker's Compensation in states where applicable.

**Jockey deaths on the racetrack** – Avelino Gomez (1980), Michelle Higley (1980), Kevin Burns (1981), Cheryl Hayden (1981), Amado Credido (1982), Burleigh Turetsky (1982), Nels Petersen (1983), Val Tonks (1983), John Dunn (1984), Federico Ruiz (1984), Lynn Estrada (1984), Charles hinojosa (1985), Kevin Lindsey (1986), Ronald Bartlett (1986), Celso Camarion (1988), Michael Venezia (1988), Stanley Wolfe (1989), Timothy Ray Stroud (1989), John Alleman (1989).

## **JOCKEYS' GUILD SIGNIFICANT EVENTS OF THE 1990s**

**Presidents** – Jerry Bailey (1989-1995), Gary Stevens (1995-1999)

**Accomplishments** – Increased insurance benefits, development and use of personal safety vests (flak jackets), improved safety helmets, inauguration of All-Star Jockey Championship.

**Jockey deaths on the racetrack** – Jeff Writgher (1990), Arturo Vallejo (1990), Rodney Dickens (1991), Lute Prospector (1991), John Haok (1991), Juan Limon (1994), James Thornton (1994), Raymond Garry (1996), Troy Fergen (1996), Miguel Figueroa (1997), Kemberly Stogner (1998), J.C. Gonzalez (1991).

## **2000 AND BEYOND**

**Presidents** – Pat Day (2000-2001), John Velazquez (2006-Present)

**Jockey deaths on the racetrack** – Isaiah Sala (2001), Arnold Ruiz (2001), Michael Rowland (2004), Christopher Quinn (2004), Michael Lapense (2005), Josh Radosevich (2005), Juan Campos (2008), Sam Thompson, Jr. (2008), Mark Pace (2009), Mark Villa (2010), Jorge Herrera (2012), Juan C. Saez (2014).

*“The staff of the Jockeys’ Guild continuously works for the safety of all riders including exercise riders, and to gain the necessary respect that jockeys deserve. The safety issues include understanding the quality of our helmets and safety vests, mandatory paramedics at every racetrack every day for training, and ensuring tracks have adequate on track accident coverage of at least \$1 million if not in a workers’ comp state. We continued to work with the tracks, regulators and horsemen regarding safety rails and reins, race medication, pre-race exams, regulation of the use of shock wave therapy and much more.” – Terry Meyocks, National Manager*

### **Accomplishments made through the Guild’s efforts since its inception include:**

- Prior to the mandatory mount fee increase to 10%, 5%, 5% of purses that the Jockeys’ Guild secured, jockeys/agents had to receive authorization from owner/trainer for payment
- Since October 2007 base mount fees raised *for all jockeys* in the majority of racing jurisdictions, the highest level of increases in 25 years
- Representation with stewards, track management and racing commissions
- Temporary disability benefits for qualified members
- Life insurance and AD&D for members
- Increase in life insurance for retired and permanently disabled members
- Adequate first aid rooms and ambulances on-track following riders
- Workers’ compensation/catastrophic insurance or on-track accident policies
- Defining and enhancing a set of safety standards
- Improvements to helmets, vests and safety rails
- Padded starting gates
- Racing cancellation policy
- In a majority of racing jurisdictions, no valets’ pool deduction for Guild members
- Reimbursement of medicine and prescription costs to Jockeys’ Guild qualified permanently disabled members
- Health insurance for qualified members and their families in several states including Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and California
- Supplemental reimbursement for health costs at several tracks based on agreements
- In California, the Jockeys’ Guild was instrumental in passing legislation for a retirement plan for qualified jockeys
- Development of Jockey Health Information System in cooperation with The Jockey Club and Keeneland
- West Virginia Supreme Court ruling that license holders have the right to appeal ejections
- Established jockey injury database with the assistance of The Jockey Club and Keeneland

## **Priorities and Goals include:**

- Improving medical standards with paramedics and medical directors at each track.
- Increasing track contributions to the Guild to allow expansion of member benefits
- Continue to represent the interest of members with regards to new rules and procedures adopted by the industry and regulators
- Cooperation with national racing organizations and racetrack management for common goals.
- Gathering of data for jockey injury database and study to be completed by University of Kentucky
- Testing of current safety equipment such as helmets, vests and safety reins
- Working with the industry to institute a new, safer scale of weights
- Raising awareness and funds for the Permanently Disabled Jockeys Fund
- Working with researchers to develop procedures in response to significant head and spinal injuries after traumatic on-track accidents.

*I am sure the generations that will carry on will never forget the Guild's purpose, will never abuse its power. I have great faith in the younger generation of jockeys and feel confident they will uphold the respect and integrity that the name JOCKEY has gained."*

-Eddie Arcaro

*"I have been a member of the Jockeys' Guild since I first started riding in the U.S. The Jockeys' Guild is the jockey. It's beneficial for all jockeys to be a member."*

-Laffit Pincay, Jr.

*"It is critical that jockeys have a place at the table when industry groups discuss the future of the sport. The Guild gives the jockeys just that – a national voice that is guided by consensus rather than just one person's opinion. The Guild speaks with one voice in the best interest of all jockeys."*

-John Velazquez,  
Chairman of the Jockeys' Guild

*"The Guild plays a critical role for jockeys in many areas nationally, but none more important than safety. The Guild has been in the forefront from the testing and development of improved safety equipment to raising the minimum standards of aftercare. New equipment and cutting edge treatment are being explored by the Guild, something none of us could do on our own yet something that could benefit each and every one of us."*

—G. R. Carter, Vice-Chairman of the  
Jockeys' Guild