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**Charles “Sonny” Brooks, D. “Jerry” Baker, Starman and Nautical  
to be Inducted into the Show Jumping Hall of Fame  
*Brooks is First African-American Honored with Induction***

Lexington, KY—March 21, 2013—The Show Jumping Hall of Fame will hold its annual induction ceremony at the Gene Mische American Invitational at Raymond James Stadium in Tampa, FL, on Saturday evening, April 6, 2013. Honored with induction will be two horses, Nautical and Starman, and two people, D. “Jerry” Baker and Charles “Sonny” Brooks, the first African-American to be so honored. These four join the previous 74 horses, riders and officials who have been inducted into the Show Jumping Hall of Fame since it was established in 1987.

**Charles “Sonny” Brooks**

Charles “Sonny” Brooks was by far the most prominent black show jumper of his era, and is the first African-American to be inducted into the Show Jumping Hall of Fame. During the 1950s and '60s, Brooks was everybody's show favorite, widely respected for his sympathetic, highly personal riding style and unusual ability to cope with green and difficult horses. His pleasant nature helped him win friends as readily as showing victories.

Brooks grew up in Bridgeport, CT, not far from the Fairfield County Hunt Club where his father, Charlie, had long run the club's stable management operation. He started riding at age ten under his father's supervision, but soon caught the eye of Hall of Fame show jumper Morton W. “Cappy” Smith, who was stabled nearby. Brooks made rapid progress with Smith's tutelage, and when the latter returned from cavalry service in World War II and moved to Middleburg, VA, he invited Brooks to join him.

When Brooks returned to Connecticut he reconnected with Hall of Famer Bill Steinkraus, who had also been a Smith protégé. Steinkraus was trying to juggle a job in New York with riding a string of Arthur Nardin's show jumpers on week-ends, and needed someone to keep his horses going during the week. He got Brooks to perform this task and then when Steinkraus made the 1952 Olympic Team, he persuaded Nardin to engage Sonny to take over showing the string in his absence, riding such top horses as Trader Bedford and Trader

Horn. Ultimately, Brooks would go on to ride for several other of the East Coast's best show jumping stables, including those of Frank Imperatore, Bernie Mann, Jay Golding, the Dunn Brothers and Norman Coates's Volco Stables.

Brooks wrote some indelible pages in show jumping history. In 1953, he earned the most wins in the history of Piping Rock's Jumper division en route to riding Ping Pong to the Jumper Championship. In 1954, he brought the dynamic Riviera Mann onto the sport page headlines. It began with a Reserve Jumper Championship at Brookville and a Championship at Piping Rock. By the end of the year, Brooks had netted no fewer than a dozen titles with Riviera Mann, including the jumper crowns at Fairfield, Ox Ridge, Boulder Brook and Oaks Hunt in Manhasset, Long Island.

Perhaps Brooks's most memorable victory came at the end of 1961 when he won the National Horse Show's Open Jumper Championship on Frank Imperatore's Grey Aero, beating three of the greatest combinations of the day – Al Fiore on Riviera Wonder, Dave Kelley on Windsor Castle, and Harry deLeyer on Snowman. In 1964 he returned to the Garden with Grey Aero and won the \$1000 Open Stake.

In the late 1960s Brooks began to encounter some serious physical problems. He spent some time in California, and then rode briefly but successfully for the Canadiana Horse Training Center in Quebec.

#### **D. "Jerry" Baker**

A highly creative, entrepreneurial force in the show jumping world for three decades, D. Gerald "Jerry" Baker played a major role in the development of American show jumping.

In 1953, he competed with the U.S. Army Team in Germany, winning Silver and Bronze Medals in Berlin. While stationed in Germany, he became impressed with European show jumping's striking contrast to what he had seen at home. When he returned home, he resolved to introduce U.S. audiences to authentic European-style Grand Prix and Derby competitions over longer courses that would include banks, ditches and water jumps, courses which were virtually unknown in the U.S. at that time.

The first competition he organized along these lines was the Cleveland Grand Prix at Chagrin, OH in 1965, the first show jumping Grand Prix in the U.S. For that event, and most of the early events he started, Baker also served as course designer. That first Cleveland course earned Baker and Laddie Andahazy, who co-designed with him, the American Horse Shows Association's 1965 Course of the Year award.

Baker followed his initial success by helping to organize other Grand Prix including one at Oak Brook, IL (1966), followed by the American Gold Cup (1970) and then a two-event California series at Santa Ana and the world-renowned Rose Bowl (1972). Baker also helped Gene Mische found the American Invitational at

Tampa in 1972. He also created the first Grand Prix in Atlantic City, NJ, and at C.W. Post College on Long Island, and he helped organize the first FEI World Cup Final in the U.S. (1980 at Baltimore, MD).

Baker also managed the noted show strings of J. Basil Ward of Gates Mills, OH and of Philadelphia's F. Eugene Dixon. In fact, Baker convinced Ward to become involved with the first Cleveland grand prix and to put up the \$3,000 prize money. His riders included eventual Hall of Famers Michael Matz and Joe Fargis. Ward's Mighty Ruler (later sold to Dixon) and Dixon's Grande (followed by Jet Run) were Matz's first mounts on the USET.

Baker later served as the Mexican chef d'equipe and was helping to develop riding facilities in Mexico at the time of his death there at the age of 60 in 1995.

## **Nautical**

Nautical is one of the most recognizable horses in the history of show jumping and not just for his bright palomino color. Ridden successfully throughout the late 1950s by Hugh Wiley, Nautical was the subject of the 1960 Disney movie, "The Horse with the Flying Tail." The movie, named for Nautical's characteristic tail expressions as he approached jumps, was the story of his journey from cow pony to eventually becoming one of the United States show jumping team's biggest assets.

Ridden with the name Injun Joe by Hall of Famers Pat Dixon, Joe Green and Cappy Smith, the difficult horse was renamed Nautical by Wiley who was on leave from the U.S. Navy. The pair's relationship began in 1955 when the horse was 11 as Wiley searched for a mount for his first USET European tour. Nautical already possessed an incredible jumping style and a few years of refined training under USET chef d'equipe Bert de Nemethy led to the development of a brave and trustworthy horse that would excel in the national and international show ring.

Just one year into the new relationship, while training for the 1956 Stockholm Olympic Games, Nautical was placed on rest for the remainder of the year due to unsoundness in his left front hoof. Following his much needed time off, Nautical entered back into competition at full strength and put together an impressive record of success. From 1956 to 1960, Wiley piloted Nautical on seven winning Nations' Cups teams in North America and Europe including wins at Toronto, New York, London, Rome and Lucerne. The pair's clear round clinched the Nations' Cup victory in Rome in 1960 in a prelude to that summer's Olympic Games.

Competing on the North American circuit, Nautical won the West Point Trophy and the Stone Trophy at the National Horse Show in New York two years in a row (1957–1958). Nautical and Wiley also won multiple classes at CSIOs in Harrisburg and Washington, as well as the Puissance in Toronto.

In 1958 and 1959, Nautical racked up several wins in London, including first place finishes in the Foxhunter Stake, Manifesto Stake, Horse and Hound Cup, and the Daily Mail Cup, as well as one of his most memorable victories, the 1959 King George V Gold Cup. He also won the Puissance at Dublin and placed 6<sup>th</sup> in the European Championships twice—in 1958 at Aachen and 1959 at Paris.

The latter end of Nautical's USET career was highlighted by his turning in the best individual score at the 1959 Pan American Games in Chicago where he helped lead the U.S. to the team Gold Medal (however, no individual medals were awarded). Nautical developed pneumonia on a flight to Germany which caused him to miss the competition at the 1960 Rome Olympic Games. Following the Games, the decision was made to retire Nautical.

At the age of 17, Nautical was officially retired in a ceremony at the National Horse Show at Madison Square Garden. Nautical lived six more years before passing away from natural causes while living on Wiley's farm in Maryland.

### **Starman**

Starman, the Westphalian stallion owned by Fran Steinwedell, carried decorated show jumper Anne Kursinski to a number of impressive accomplishments including a team Silver Medal at the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul, Korea.

Starman and Kursinski first teamed up in 1987, and their performances that year helped the United States claim Nations' Cup victories at three of the world's most significant horse shows – Hickstead, England; Aachen, Germany; and Calgary, Canada. Largely because of her accomplishments with Starman, Kursinski was named that year's American Horse Shows Association Horsewoman of the Year.

The highlight of Starman's career came at the 1988 Olympics where, in addition to helping the U.S. team win the Silver Medal, he and Kursinski tied for fourth place in the individual competition. Two years later in 1990, the duo competed in the first-ever World Equestrian Games (comprising the World Championships) in Stockholm, Sweden and helped the U.S. team place fourth. Later that year, Starman was named the Show Jumping Horse of the Year by *The Chronicle of the Horse*.

In 1991, Starman and Kursinski added their names to the show jumping history books by taking top honors in the Grand Prix of Aachen. With that win, Kursinski became only the second woman and third American to emerge victorious in the prestigious grand prix in its 80-year history. They also placed seventh in that year's World Cup Finals where Kursinski was named the Leading Lady Rider. Their overall record together led to Kursinski being named that year's Female Equestrian Athlete of the Year by the U.S. Olympic Committee.

Besides demonstrating his show jumping prowess, Starman also displayed great talent in the hunter ring as well, even emerging as a conformation hunter champion at the Winter Equestrian Festival in Wellington, FL. He later became a highly sought-after sport horse stallion.

Starman retired from competition in 1994 at the age of 15. He lived as a breeding stallion at Pollyrich Farms in Solvang, California until his death on July 4, 2006.

### **About the Show Jumping Hall of Fame**

The Show Jumping Hall of Fame and Museum was established in 1987 and formally opened at Busch Gardens in Tampa, FL in 1989. It was organized to promote the sport of show jumping and to immortalize the legends of the men, women and horses who have made great contributions to the sport.

Since 2010, the Show Jumping Hall of Fame has been located at the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington, KY. Plaques honoring those who have been honored with induction into the Hall of Fame can be seen at the Horse Park's Rolex Stadium. Mementos and artifacts from the sport's history are on display as part of the Show Jumping Hall of Fame collection at the United States Hunter Jumper Association's Wheeler Museum at the Horse Park.

Further information about the Show Jumping Hall of Fame, including a list of all previous inductees, is available on line at [www.ShowJumpingHallofFame.net](http://www.ShowJumpingHallofFame.net).