

2002 Harry R. Gill



A lifelong horseman, Harry R. Gill was a major force in the world of Grand Prix show jumping for many years. A longtime supporter of some of show jumping's leading riders, Gill owned many of the country's most famed horses. One of the sport's foremost authorities on footing, Gill served the industry by improving horse show venues and riding conditions, and as a member of several Boards of Directors and Organizing Committees.

Gill's slew of champions is headed by the legendary Idle Dice, a charter inductee into the Show Jumping Hall of Fame. Ridden to greatness by Hall of Famer Rodney Jenkins, "Ike" won honors as the AHSA Horse of the Year, rode for the USET in the 1974 World Championships and won the American Gold Cup three times. Gill also owned the PHA Horse of the Year, Gustavus; the AHSA Horse of the Year, Beanbag; and the AGA Horse of the Year, Viktor. Other horses ridden under Gill's ownership included such superstars as Number One Spy, Sloopy, Brendan, Philco, French Rapture, Ping Pong, Robin Hood, Another March and Twist du Valon.

As owner of these horses, Gill created partnerships with some of the nation's leading riders including Jenkins, McLain Ward, Michael Matz, Katie Monahan Prudent, Debbie Stephens and Beezie Madden. Quietly, Gill occasionally provided several riders who lacked a horse or the funds with the horse power needed to become champions.

Growing up on a family farm, Gill spent his childhood riding a pony or giant workhorse instead of a bicycle. As a young man, he enjoyed fox hunting as well as showing. He ran a successful show stable in Pennsylvania with his wife Marjorie Gill as rider until his father's death, when he assumed control of the family business, Gill Quarries. Unwilling to completely give up horses, he hired Jenkins to ride for him. The partnership proved to be a winning combination as the two men rewrote the record books of American show jumping with Idle Dice and Number One Spy.

Gill contributed to the sport by serving on the Board of Directors for Stadium Jumping, Inc., the American Grandprix Association, and the Devon Horse Show. In 1981, Gill played an enormous role as a member of the Organizing Committee for the World Cup Final held in Baltimore, helping to bring the Final to the United States for the first time. He was also a member of the Organizing Committee for the Baltimore Jumping Classic, Devon Horse Show and the American Gold Cup, which he helped out of its financial troubles and then helped establish it as one of the sport's premier events.

