

2009 Neal Shapiro



The high point of Neal Shapiro's career came at the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich when, riding Sloopy, he won the individual Bronze Medal and teamed with Bill Steinkraus, Frank Chapot, and Kathy Kusner to win the team Silver.

Shapiro, who made his USEF debut in 1964, rode on 12 winning Nations' Cup teams, including wins in Harrisburg, Washington, New York, Toronto, Lucerne, and Aachen. He won the Grand Prix in Aachen on Jacks or Better in 1966 and tied for that win on Sloopy in 1971. Other major wins included England's Last Chance Cup and Horse and Hound Cup, the President's Cup in Washington, the Grand Prix of Harrisburg and international classes at Harrisburg, Washington, the National Horse Show, The Royal Winter Fair and LaBaule, France. Shapiro was the Leading International Rider at the National Horse Show and in 1972 the AHSA named him "Horseman of the Year."

Shapiro's first major success came on Uncle Max, a former rodeo horse. A self-taught rider later trained by Show Jumping Hall of Famer Bertalan de Nemethy, Shapiro emulated such stars as Dave Kelley, Johnny Bell, Sonny Brooks, and Ben O'Meara. He became the youngest rider ever to ride a mount to the AHSA Horse of the Year Award, when he won the award for green jumpers at 15 with Uncle Max in 1961. Shapiro and Uncle Max were reserve PHA champions in 1963. A year later, on Uncle Max and Jacks or Better, Shapiro took the PHA's top two places, a first in PHA history.

Shapiro became interested in trotters in the 1970s, and he has had great success training and driving Standardbreds. He returned to the world of show jumpers in 1998. Shapiro and his wife Elisa Fernandez, a former member of the Mexican Equestrian Team, opened a training facility in central New Jersey in 2007.

