

2013 Steve Stephens



Steve Stephens started winning at the Grand Prix level while still in high school. After a successful career that spanned nearly two decades, he went on to achieve great success as a horse show manager, course designer and proprietor of Stephens Equestrian Designs, one of the world's most respected companies specializing in the design and manufacture of jumps for competition.

Stephens trained with the U.S. Equestrian Team and competed from 1968 through 1986. He won such major events as the Cleveland Grand Prix, American Gold Cup, Grand Prix of Montreal and American Grandprix Association (AGA) Championships.

Analyzing courses piqued his interest in building jumps and designing courses. He studied course design under Bert de Némethy and Dr. Arno Gego and served as an assistant to de Némethy when he was course designer at the FEI World Cup Finals in Baltimore (1980) and Tampa (1989), as well as at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games. Stephens was also an assistant to Gego when he was course designer at Aachen in 1996 and 1998 and to Leopoldo Palacios at the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

In the 1980s, Stephens emerged as one of the world's most respected course designers, working dozens of shows such as the Washington International, National Horse Show, Royal Winter Fair, Winter Equestrian Festival, Devon and the American Invitational for which he has been the only course designer for nearly 30 years. Internationally, he has designed courses in Canada, Germany, The Netherlands and Mexico and at the 1987 Pan American Games in Indianapolis and 2008 Olympic Games in Hong Kong. He won the award as Course Designer of the Year twice and in 2004 he was certified through the Aachen School of Course Design.

Stephens served as U.S. Chef d'Equipe five times. His teams won the Nations' Cup four of those times, most notably, the Nations' Cup World Final in Belgium in 1991. Stephens has also served as manager of some of the nation's biggest and most significant horse shows including the Winter Equestrian Festival, National Horse Show and Hampton Classic where he was manager from 1984-2013. He has also been Technical Delegate at four FEI World Cup Finals.

In 1992 Stephens opened Stephens Equestrian Designs, which provides jumps to dozens of the nation's most prestigious events including the Winter Equestrian Festival, American Invitational, Devon Horse Show, Lake Placid Horse Shows and Hampton Classic. His unique ability to combine artistic design that can represent the specific characteristics of a particular horse show with the challenges that a course designer will want to present have set him apart and made his jump business one of the most successful in the world. In 2013, the USHJA honored Stephens with its Lifetime Achievement Award.

