



River Ridge Charity Horse Show

Official Show Program



Don Harris
& ^{CH}Imperator



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Friday Night, April 27, 2018, Honoree, Don Harris



Don Harris Presentation

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We would like you to please turn your attention to Center Ring to view a Rare Event here tonight at The River Ridge Charity Horse Show.

It is our privilege to have a most special attendee in our presence who is known throughout the American Saddlebred Industry as a gracious, kind, dedicated and certainly the most talented of Horsemen ever to grace this arena here at River Ridge.

Don Harris was born in Elkhart, Indiana 87 years ago to a family whose father was in the coal mining business and had horses for a hobby. Don started riding those ponies at the age of 4. He showed in every baseball diamond and cornfield in Southern Indiana. He gathered a big fan base winning in those events. Not far behind in his dreams was the State's biggest pastime, basketball. He loved showing in those baseball diamonds and cornfields so much so that he turned down a dream for a basketball scholarship opportunity to Perdue University. In the end, the horses won him over.

For the Saddlebred Industry, this was a beginning to see his talent. He opened a small stable in 1951 in Elberfield, IN. His barn became so famous that he moved to Owensboro, Indiana in 1966 for customers such as Maria Partlow, Kathy and Debbie Hagerman. Don was offered an opportunity 5 years later from Marjorie Wagner to join her in 1971 in Simpsonville, KY with some land that she purchased, opening Coppercoin Farm on 5 acres of that land. There were only three Saddlebred Farms in Simpsonville at the time and he had as much to do with putting Simpsonville on the map as the Saddlebred Capital of the World as anyone because dozens of other Saddlebred farms followed.

Ladies and Gentleman, the rest is history. Don showed here at River Ridge for many, many years from the 1950's to 2007. The ASHA record books that recorded River Ridge beginning in 1988 to 2007, Don Harris alone took home 58 blue ribbons and championships out of 105 trips into this ring! Let's double these numbers with his customers as there were many. You all have heard their names and watched them win on the World Championship stage and if you attended The River Ridge Charity Horse Show, you saw them here too.



Don Harris Presentation

Some of those World Champion names you are familiar with showed right here: Emperor, Giddy-Up-Go, Prize Contender, Sultan's Starina, Protégé, Fortune's Fanfare, A Lotta Lovin', Finisterre's Gift of Love, Our Canary Diamond, Bi-Mi World Premier, Shoobop Shoobop, The Groomsman, New Estate, You Are Love, Wild and Lovely, Lady Periana, Rare Decision, America's Jazz Man, Manhattan Wine, Aubergene and Five O'Clock. We are omitting so many due to time constraints – I wish we could name them all.

During his five decades of showing American Saddlebreds, Don's accolades are numerous. His highlights include:

- 1980 American Horse Shows Association (now the ASHA) Horseman of the Year
- 1994 World's Championship Hall of Fame, Freedom Hall, Louisville, KY
- 1996 The American Saddlebred Horse Association C.J. Cronan Sportsmanship Award
- 2010 the most coveted award given to any Horseman - The Jimmy A. Williams United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) Lifetime Achievement Award
- 2015 The Wing Commander Medal for demonstrating outstanding service to the ASHA and the breed, and through dedication, attracting interest to the breed and advancing its popularity to the public

Ladies and Gentlemen, we are extremely honored that Don could make this trip up to Columbus from Simpsonville one more time so we could honor a man who thrilled this arena with so many famous and entertaining rides and has regarded The River Ridge Charity Horse Show as one of his favorites throughout his five decades of showing horses all over the United States.

Congratulations Don! Please add River Ridge to your Walls of Honor as we will never forget how many thrills you gave to us!

Introduction written by Bess Cable

Don Harris at River Ridge 1995



River Ridge Charity
Region: 8
Class Date: 5/6/1995
Fine Harness Championship
Judges: Fern Bittner
Exhibitor: Don Harris

Entries: 4
Placings: 1
High Pts: 0
KSF: 0
KSFW: 0

CH: 2.0
CHEQ: 0.0
NP: 0
Money Won: \$150.00
GN Prize Earnings: \$0.00
USEF Licensed

River Ridge Charity
Region: 8
Class Date: 5/5/1995
Fine Harness Junior
Judges: Fern Bittner
Exhibitor: Don Harris

Entries: 2
Placings: 1
High Pts: 0
KSF: 0
KSFW: 0

CH: 0.0
CHEQ: 0.0
NP: 0
Money Won: \$35.00
GN Prize Earnings: \$0.00
USEF Licensed