7th Annual Hartack Award to be Presented to Kentucky Derby Winning Jockey Victor Espinoza at Santa Anita Park on April 2nd

New Orleans, LA - February 18, 2015 - The Bill Hartack Charitable Foundation announced today that 2014 Kentucky Derby winning jockey Victor Espinoza is the recipient of the Hartack Memorial Award, to be presented April 2nd at Santa Anita Park in Arcadia, California.

The annual presentation honors the memory and lifetime achievements of Bill Hartack, one of only two jockeys to win the Kentucky Derby five times.

Hartack Recipient Victor Espinoza

Espinoza, did it the hard way, ascending from jockey school in his native Mexico City in 1992 all the way to leading apprentice at the former Bay Meadows Racetrack and Golden Gate Fields. That was followed by a successful move to Southern California, where he has been leading rider multiple times at all the major meets. Espinoza had an outstanding 2014 winning his second Kentucky Derby and Preakness Stakes aboard Horse of the Year California Chrome, and was the regular pilot for two other Eclipse champions, American Pharoah and Take Five.
Charge Brandi.

To read more about Victor Espinoza, click here.

Santa Anita Park

Opened in 1934, Santa Anita Park continues to hold a prominent place in the sport of thoroughbred racing. The picturesque track is located at the foot of the San Gabriel Mountains and is home to several prestigious races, including the Santa Anita Derby and the Santa Anita Handicap.

Santa Anita has hosted the Breeders' Cup World Championships for the past three consecutive years, and plans to host the event again in 2016, for an unprecedented ninth time. The site of Seabiscuit's legendary 1940 Santa Anita Handicap win, the park continues to improve and enhance its facilities, having recently installed a new all-natural dirt main track, providing a safer surface for the horses to run on.

Santa Anita Park President Tom Ludt said, "Santa Anita is honored to host the presentation of the Hartack Memorial Award that is being presented to Victor Espinoza. We congratulate him on his thrilling Kentucky Derby win and his continued success with the hometown hero California Chrome."

Hartack Foundation Board Member Mike Stidham said, "The Hartack Foundation was created not only to honor the memory of the great Bill Hartack, but also to acknowledge and celebrate the wealth of talent that exists today in the racing industry. We are honored to present this year's Hartack Memorial Award to Victor Espinoza."

The Neiman Award

The Hartack Foundation will also recognize trainer Art Sherman with the "Neiman" award. The award recognizes Thoroughbred trainers for their commitment and contributions to the racing industry. At the age of 77 Art Sherman became the oldest trainer to win the Kentucky Derby. He began his career as a stable hand. He was the exercise rider for the 1955 Kentucky Derby winner Swaps and 1956 Kentucky Derby entrant Terrang. In 1957, Sherman became a licensed jockey. He began training horses in 1979.
Prior to becoming the trainer of California Chrome, Sherman had trained ten graded stakes winners and is credited with over 2,100 wins. He was hired to train California Chrome in 2013. Leading up to the 2014 Kentucky Derby, Sherman had conditioned the horse through four consecutive wins, and California Chrome entered the Derby as the favorite and won. Two weeks later, California Chrome also won the 2014 Preakness Stakes.

Art Sherman with California Chrome at Pimlico Race Course

The Neiman award is named for Hartack Foundation founding board member LeRoy Neiman (1921-2012) who passed away at the age of 91. Neiman, a long-time friend of Bill Hartack, was one of America’s most popular artists known for his brilliantly colored, impressionistic sketches of sporting events and the international high life. In popularity, Mr. Neiman rivaled American favorites like Norman Rockwell, Grandma Moses and Andrew Wyeth.

Presentation of the Hartack Memorial Award

The Hartack Award will be presented on Thursday April 2nd at Santa Anita Park. To purchase advertising space in the 2015 Hartack Commemorative Book, click here or contact Angie Athaye Stevens, (757) 870-1148, angie@meticulous.com.

Hartack Contributions to Benefit City of Hope

Contributions from this year’s Hartack Event will benefit City of Hope, a comprehensive cancer treatment center located in Los Angeles. The charity was selected by Victor Espinoza who, after visiting the center more than 10 years ago, was deeply impacted by the children being treated there and pledged to regularly donate approximately 10% of his earnings to the facility. City of Hope was founded in 1913 and is one of 41 National Cancer Institute designated comprehensive cancer centers in the United States. The center focuses on patient centered care and clinical research, and is a founding member of the National Comprehensive Cancer Network.

Past Recipients

2014 - Joel Rosario

2013 - Mario Gutierrez
2012 - John Velazquez
2010, 2011 - Calvin Borel
2009 - Kent Jason Desormeaux

About the Foundation

The Bill Hartack Charitable Foundation was established by the friends of the late Bill Hartack to honor the memory and lifetime achievements of the five-time Kentucky Derby winner. The Foundation, through its philanthropic arm, annually contributes to Thoroughbred racing industry charities and recognizes the jockey who rides the Kentucky Derby winner each year with the Bill Hartack Memorial Award.

During Hartack's lifetime, he held the title of United States' leading jockey four times throughout his career in Thoroughbred racing. He is one of only two jockeys to ever win the Kentucky Derby five times and was the first rider to have purse earnings of more than $3 million in a season. He was inducted into the National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame in 1959 at the early age of 27. Hartack is recognized as one of the most competitive and successful riders in Thoroughbred racing history.

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