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## Frederick L. Van Lennep Memorial Award



Since 1987, the Breeders Crown committee of the Hambletonian Society has selected individuals and organizations to be honored with the Frederick L. Van Lennep Memorial Achievement Award.

The late Van Lennep was a visionary figure in the industry, as well as a vital advocate in the advancement and promotion of harness racing. He was a seminal influence in the creation of the Breeders Crown and one of the biggest proponents of the divisional championship series.

Aside from fostering the Breeders Crown program, Van Lennep and his wife Frances Dodge built Castleton Farms into one of the premier breeding and racing operations of the era. Van Lennep was also an avid amateur driver, on the board of the Tattersalls Sales Company, a racetrack owner, U.S.T.A. director, HTA director and considered the father of Florida's pari-mutuel racing.

Additionally, Van Lennep helped create the American Horse Council and the Gluck Equine Research Center. He was a leader and tireless promoter of the sport he loved, and the award that bears his name is a tremendous reflection on those who've earned it.

- 2007: Racing, Medication & Testing Consortium for their efforts at a national level to facilitate the development, promotion and coordination of policies, research, and educational programs which seek to ensure the fairness and integrity of racing and the health and welfare of racehorses and participants, and protect the interests of the betting public.
- 2006: Jeff Gural, an owner, breeder and racetrack owner, for his immeasurable contributions to the sport of harness racing.
- 2005: Bruce Garland, Senior Executive Vice President for the NJSEA for his leadership role in the sport.  
Hugh Mitchell, Senior Vice-President of Racing for WEG for his leadership role in North American harness racing.
- 2004 Ontario Racing Commission, for its effort to improve the integrity of racing.
- 2003 The Red Mile Ownership, Lexington, Ky., for preserving a traditional icon in harness racing.
- 2002: Norma Campbell, Meadowlands owner liaison and special event coordinator.
- 2001: Joe DeFrank, Director of Racing at The Meadowlands.
- 1999: Niatross and Walnridge Farm for the North American Niatross Tour.  
Carol Cramer for the sport's curriculum vitae, the US Trotting Association Stakes Guide.
- 1998: The Meadowlands Racetrack for conducting the premier harness racing meet in the world for more than three decades.  
The Harness Racing Museum & Hall of Fame for their preservation of the hallowed traditions of the sport and the enshrinement and immortalization of equine and human stars of racing.
- 1997: The Ontario Jockey Club for more than 20 years commitment to the Breeders Crown program.
- 1996: Tomas Bertmark for international advancement of trotting via the Internet site [www.kgb.se](http://www.kgb.se).
- 1994: Tom Charters for his leadership and stewardship of the Breeders Crown championship program.
- 1993: Bob Rosburg Jr. for his extraordinary work in harness racing television.

### Frederick L. Van Lennep Memorial Award *continued*

- 1992: “Trader Bud” Hatfield for his promotion of corporate team and amateur racing and his charitable endeavors.
- 1991: John Simpson Sr. for his unparalleled leadership and horsemanship over many decades, as well as his continuation of the legacy of the Hanover Shoe Farms.
- 1990: Louis P. Guida for his commitment to ownership of great race horses in partnership and groundbreaking stallion syndication.
- 1989: Norman Woolworth for fifty years of exemplary sportsmanship in racing and breeding standardbreds.
- 1988: Castleton Farms for their exceptional breeding and racing stables.
- 1987: ESPN for their unprecedented broadcast hours devoted to harness racing television.

## Charlie Keller Yankeeland Breeders Bonus



**Charles Keller III**, besides carrying on the legacy of his father’s Yankeeland Farms breeding and racing empire, was an accomplished athlete and a benevolent supporter of harness racing. He was named a Director of the Hambletonian Society in 2000, later serving on the executive committee of the Society, and was the Executive Chairman from 2013 to 2015. **Mr. Keller** was on the Society board till he passed in August of 2021, but also served five terms as a District 11 director for the US Trotting Association (USTA) from 1999-2014 and was active on the Finance Committee. During his tenure on the Breeders Crown committee of the Society, he was instrumental in bringing the Breeders Crown to a new host track in Indiana, Harrah’s Hoosier Park, and helped negotiate a three-year rotation of host track commitments for the sport’s championship series that helped the track partners and the Breeders Crown flourish.

**Charlie’s** accomplishments and good character were acknowledged by the industry by his induction into the Harness Racing Hall of Fame in 2016.

Upon his passing in 2021, **Charlie** also left an honorarium to be paid to the winning breeder of the Breeders Crown Mare Trot, a race that will bear his name on the memorial trophy.

For the next 10 years, the winning breeder of the Mare Trot champion will receive the **Charlie Keller** Yankeeland \$10,000 bonus. The event choice stemmed from arguably the most famous “Yankee” that **Charlie’s** father bred in the early days of Yankeeland Farms of Frederick, Maryland. A daughter of Hickory Pride-Pert Yankee-Titan Hanover foal, Fresh Yankee was bred and sold by Yankeeland, bringing a mere \$900 as a yearling. She would go on to race until 1972, and earn \$1,294,252.

Fresh Yankee was North America’s first “million dollar” trotter and second in the world list only to the famous French mare Une de Mai. Fresh Yankee was the season or world champion for seven consecutive years and retired as the leading money winning American Standardbred of all time.

It is no surprise that **Charlie’s** legacy and generosity will continue to reverberate in the sport of harness racing long after his death.

**\*\*In 2022 Bella Bellini won the 2022 Mare Trot and her owner-breeder Dave McDuffee won the first Keller Breeders Bonus**



## BREEDERS CROWN TROPHIES NAMED IN MEMORY OF INDUSTRY AND BREEDERS CROWN LEADERS

The iconic crystal trophies that have graced the Breeders Crown championship series since 1984 have born additional etching in recent years. The Hambletonian Society, which owns and administers the Breeders Crown series, has designated memorial trophies in honor of individuals whose influence on the creation of the series and in the greater sphere of harness racing cannot be overstated.

The Three-Year-Old Colt Pace trophy is inscribed the H. A. Grant Jr. Memorial Trophy and its trotting counterpart is named in memory of John Cashman Jr. Both were longtime board members and former chairs of the executive committee of the Hambletonian Society, Grant from 1998 to 2008 and Cashman from 2008 until his death in 2012. Both were deeply committed to the Society's mission to promote and preserve the Standardbred breed, and were instrumental in creating the Breeders Crown championship in 1984. Their involvement in the sport spanned several decades and nearly every level of participation - from caretaker to Hall of Fame.

The Two-Year-Old Filly Trot trophy is named the Frederick Van Lennep Memorial Trophy. Van Lennep was a vital advocate in the advancement and promotion of harness racing. Inducted into the Harness Racing Hall of Fame in 1974, Van Lennep was Chairman of the Board of Pompano Harness Track, The Red Mile, and owner of Lexington-based Castleton Farms, one of the world's foremost Standardbred horse-breeding operations.

In 1983, Van Lennep, a director of the Hambletonian Society, was instrumental in creating and executing the concept that led to the Breeders Crown series, the year-end championship races for each age, gender and gait. Van Lennep, along with close friend and business partner, thoroughbred breeder John Gaines, conceived a season-ending championship forum for their respective breeds, similar to baseball's World Series or the Super Bowl in football. Both versions, thoroughbred racing's Breeder's Cup and harness racing's Breeders Crown, were an immediate success.

William B. Weaver, a 2013 Hall of Fame inductee, is honored with the Bill Weaver Memorial Trophy for Two-Year-Old Trotting Colts. Weaver was responsible for the mating that produced Valley Victory, who sent a shockwave of speed through the bloodlines of the modern day trotter. His first crop featured five offspring in the Hambletonian, with Victory Dream winning. His stupendous daughter Continental-victory won one of the most memorable versions of America's trotting classic the next year (1996) in straight heats. Valley Victory's third Hambo winner in five crops was the equally impactful Muscles Yankee (1998). Over a span of 15 years, Valley Victory sired the winners of \$35 million in purses.

The Breeders Crown Three-Year-Old Filly Pace trophy is named the Max C. Hempt Memorial Trophy and its trotting counterpart in memory of John Simpson Sr.

Max C. Hempt was a director of the Hambletonian Society from 1957-1989 and president of the Society from 1966-1984. The creation of the Breeders Crown series in 1983 evolved under his administration, and he was the original chairman of the first Breeders Crown committee. The renowned Hempt breeding farm produced many champions bearing the prefix "Keystone" to reflect their Pennsylvania origins, including two Horse of the Year winners in Stenographer and Keystone Ore.

In addition to being a major breeder, Hempt was a successful amateur driver, a U.S. Trotting Association director for 21 years, and a vice-president and trustee of The Harness Racing Museum & Hall of Fame, to which he was inducted in 1979. He was also co-owner of the great Fancy Crown, who was "Crowned" in the inaugural sophomore filly trot in 1984.

The Breeders Crown Three-Year-Old Filly Trot Trophy memorializes John F. Simpson Sr. A successful driver-trainer of his era, in 1951 Simpson was designated by Lawrence Sheppard of the dynastic Hanover Shoe Farms to guide the fortunes of the "Shoe" Farms breeding, racing and training interests for many years.

Simpson Sr. served as a director of the Hambletonian Society from 1971 until his death in 1995, and was on the original Breeders Crown committee that helped shape and direct the Breeders Crown championship series. Hanover Shoe Farms was the longest-running sponsor of both the Hambletonian and the Breeders Crown, and created the Simpson Stakes for two and three-year-old trotters and pacers. The list of champions trained and driven by Simpson Sr., and those bred by Hanover under his direction are too long to list, but encompass every major race around the globe.

In 2022 the Mare Trot Trophy was etched with Hambletonian Society director Charlie Keller Jr.'s name. Keller continued and grew the legacy of his father's Yankeeland Farm. (*see page 6*)

Crystal Apex Awards and Design of Sheridan, Ontario, Canada handcraft the winner's trophies that feature 12-inch high crystal monoliths individually deep-etched to carry the ornate Breeders Crown logo. Each crystal piece is mounted atop a tiered, ebonized wood base upon which a plaque is hand engraved with the name of the Breeders Crown champion.