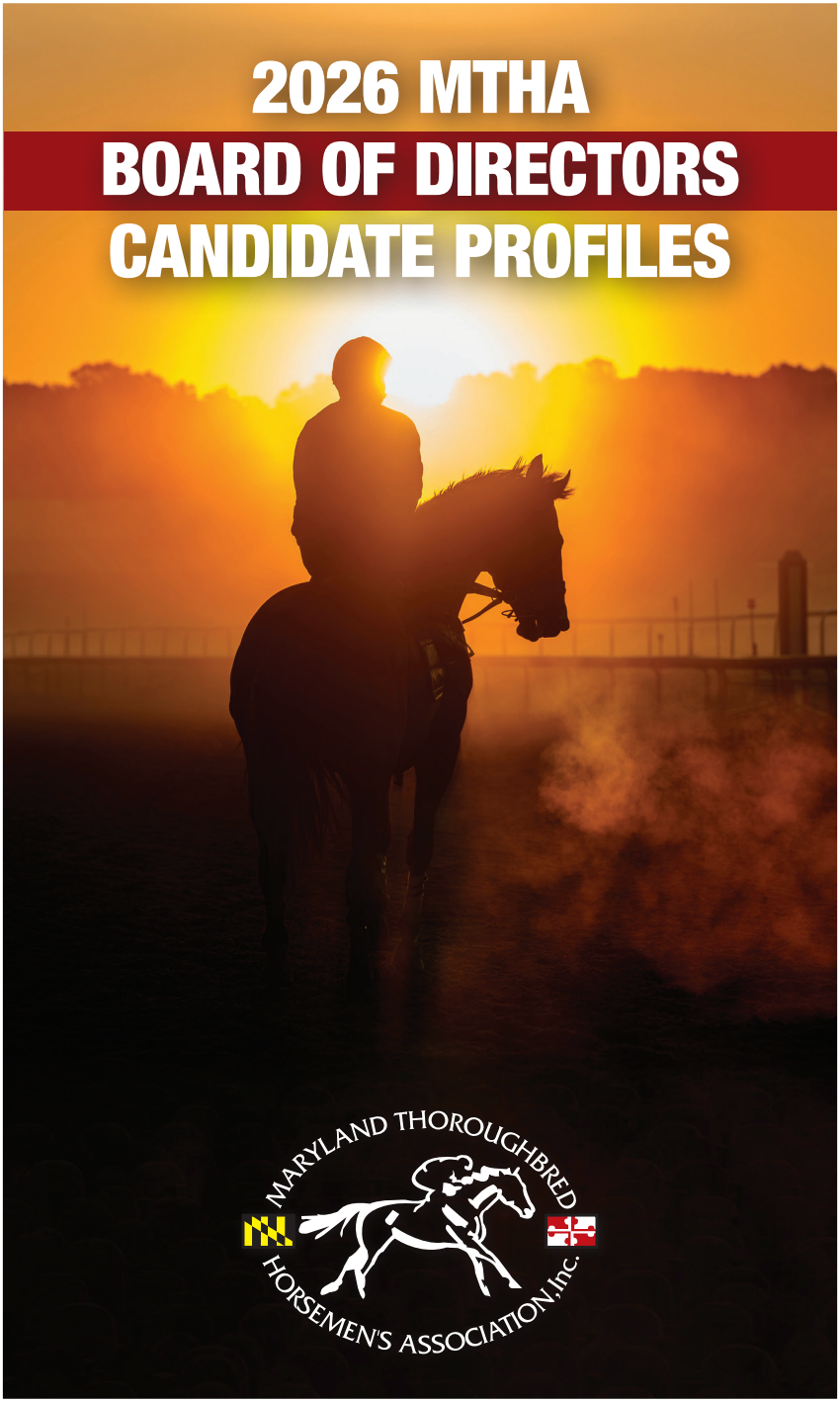
2026 MTHA
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
CANDIDATE PROFILES



MARYLAND THOROUGHBRED HORSEMEN'S ASSOCIATION, Inc.

PLEASE NOTE:

All ballots are due to be received (not postmarked) no later than **DECEMBER 31, 2026** to be eligible to be counted.

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Owner Candidate

DAVID HAYDEN

David Hayden brings nearly 55 years of involvement in Maryland racing, extensive regulatory experience and a background in marketing and promotion to his candidacy for the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association Board of Directors. He and his wife, JoAnn, co-own Dark Hollow Farm and Safely Home Farm, where they have built a breeding and racing operation with success at the sport's highest levels.

Together, the Haydens have bred, raced or sold more than 60 stakes horses, including Safely Kept, the 1989 champion sprinter, 1990 Breeders' Cup Sprint winner and Racing Hall of Fame inductee. Dark Hollow's operation includes 14 broodmares, four yearlings retained for racing, eight weanlings and six horses in training.

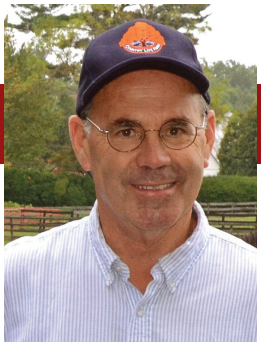
David served on the Maryland Racing Commission for 15 years and has been a member of the Maryland Horse Breeders Association and MTHA for decades. That experience gives him a broad perspective on the relationships among breeding, racing, regulation and the business decisions that shape the industry's future.

He recalls Maryland racing's resurgence under Frank DeFrancis and the Manfuso brothers, when creative advertising and promotions attracted fans, well-maintained facilities welcomed horses and people, and the racing program flourished.

"It was fun to take your friends to the track," David said. "Local ownership and management cared. Money was spent. Money was made."

As Maryland moves forward with racing redevelopment, David sees an opportunity to apply those lessons. His priorities include safe, functional stabling, consistent track maintenance, adequate backstretch housing, welcoming public facilities and marketing that gives people a reason to return to the races.

"This is our chance to get it right for the horses, with a proper stable area and track maintenance, proper housing for backstretch workers, proper frontside facilities, and proper marketing strategies and campaigns," David said. "I'm retired and have the time and energy to work diligently to restore Maryland racing back to the 'best of times' with my fellow MTHA board members if elected."



Owner Candidate

JOSEPH P. PONS, JR.

Joseph P. (Josh) Pons Jr. is a lifelong Maryland horseman, third-generation farm owner, and two-time Eclipse Award-winning writer. With his brother, Mike, he operates two of Maryland's historic Thoroughbred farms: Country Life Farm, established in 1933 in Bel Air, and Merryland Training Center, founded in 1939 in Hydes. The brothers have managed Country Life since the early 1980s and purchased Merryland in 2001, combining breeding, foaling, sales preparation, and training in an operation that serves horses throughout their careers.

Country Life Farm also holds a special place in racing history as the birthplace of two-time Horse of the Year Cigar, the all-time earnings leader among Maryland-bred racehorses.

Country Life's stallion program includes Divining Rod, Mosler, and Friesan Fire, with Provenance—the son of Into Mischief and champion Monomoy Girl—joining the breeding roster for 2027 in partnership with Spendthrift Farm. Nearby Merryland supports the operation's young horses and racing prospects with its five-eighths-mile training track.

A 1976 graduate of the University of Virginia and a 1982 graduate of the University of Kentucky School of Law, Josh is the author of Letters from Country Life: Adolphe Pons, Man o' War, and the Founding of Maryland's Oldest Thoroughbred Farm, recipient of the 2024 Dr. Tony Ryan Book Award.

Josh is a past president of the Maryland Horse Breeders Association and has served two three-year terms on the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association board. His work as an industry advocate reflects a longstanding commitment to Maryland racing and to bringing new participants into the sport. He and his wife, Ellen, reside at Country Life. They have two adult sons, Josh and August.

Owner Candidate

DAVID R. HUGHES

David Hughes is a Thoroughbred owner, technology executive, and entrepreneur who brings extensive business experience and a longstanding commitment to Maryland racing to his candidacy for the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association Board of Directors. He and his wife, Lori, own Mens Grille Racing, a Laurel Park-based stable. Over 15 years of active involvement in the sport, they have owned several hundred horses and averaged more than 60 starts annually.

Among their most accomplished runners is Studlydoright, Maryland-bred champion 2-year-old male of 2024. Trained by John "Jerry" Robb, the colt won the Tremont Stakes at Saratoga and the Nashua Stakes at Aqueduct, and finished second in Saratoga's Grade 3 Sanford Stakes. His success brought national attention to a stable with deep roots in Maryland racing. Maryland Jockey Club, New York Racing Association

Mens Grille Racing has also campaigned several accomplished stakes-winning fillies and mares. Roanan Goddess won Laurel's Xtra Heat, Searching, and Safely Kept stakes in 2024. Enchanted Ghost captured the 2018 Wide Country and 2019 Maryland Racing Media stakes, while Response Time won the 2023 Timonium Distaff. Whiskey and Rye added a Pimlico stakes victory in the 2023 Sensible Lady Turf Dash. New York Thoroughbred Breeders, Laurel Park, Country Life Farm, Maryland Jockey Club stakes results

The stable concentrates on racing, giving David a direct understanding of the costs and decisions owners face in keeping horses in training. He views owner retention, new investment, and consistent racing opportunities as essential to the health of Maryland's trainers, backstretch workforce, and breeding industry.

"I am running for the MTHA Board of Directors in an effort to support Maryland racing, an industry that has provided me with such pleasure over the years," David said.

His priorities include making ownership economically sustainable at every level, addressing rising costs and reduced racing opportunities, and giving Maryland-based horses more chances to compete. He supports exploring additional Maryland-restricted races modeled on the Maryland Million to strengthen demand for locally bred and sired horses, while recognizing the importance of competitive fields to wagering.

"Owners are feeling the financial pressure of rising costs, reduced local purse structures and declining local racing days," he said. "I believe we need to look at the economic realities of the sport so that we retain our current owners while also encouraging new owners to get into the game."

During a 40-year career in technology and entrepreneurship, David has helped large organizations improve operations, manage complex decisions, and implement changes across their businesses. He is co-founder and managing partner of TurningPoint Global Solutions, a 500-person software development and services company that helps federal and state agencies reduce fraud, waste, and abuse. He hopes to apply that experience to the financial and operational challenges facing Maryland racing.

David has previously been elected to and served on two other boards. He earned a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering from Duke University, where he was a member of the men's golf team and Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity.

Owner Candidate

MICHAEL D. GOLDEN

Dr. Michael Golden is the President of Northview Stallion Station in Chesapeake City, Md. It is a prominent Mid-Atlantic Thoroughbred breeding farm originally co-founded by his late father, Richard Golden, in 1989.

Michael graduated from Cornell University with a degree in veterinary medicine and for 30 years has operated a successful small-animal practice in Crofton, Md.

Michael serves as President of Northview Stallion Station alongside his sister, Lisa Hofstetter, who is Vice President, and General Manager David Wade. Michael become more active in management and took a leadership role following the passing of his father in 2021. Northview is located adjacent Sycamore Hall Farm, which is owned by the family.

Northview stands seven stallions: Endorsed, Engage, First Mondays, Galawi, Golden Lad, Post Time and Uncle Lino. The farm is home to the retired Great Notion, one of the top sires in Maryland breeding and racing history.

Michael also operates Golden Lion Racing, which owns Thoroughbreds alone or in partnership with entities including BTR Racing Stable, Hillwood Stable, Madaket Stables and Hidden Brook Farm Golden Lion Racing's runners include the filly Complexity Jane, a three-time Maryland stakes winner trained by Brittany Russell.

Michael is running for the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Board of Directors because he has a particular interest in promoting Thoroughbred aftercare and the Beyond The Wire program, which is operated by the MTHA. He also wants to contribute to the welfare of the hundreds of backstretch employees who work at Laurel Park.

Owner Candidate

LINDA S. GAUDET

Linda Gaudet has served on the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association Board of Directors since 1994, bringing extensive industry experience and a sustained commitment to the people who care for Maryland's racehorses. She devotes countless hours to the often behind-the-scenes work of supporting horsemen, improving backstretch conditions and strengthening the racing community.

Linda serves on the MTHA's Medication, Racing, and Health and Welfare committees. She is also a President of the Maryland Horsemen's Assistance Foundation, which provides financial assistance to members of the racing community in need, and a founding member of the Beyond the Wire Board of Directors.

Her advocacy extends to the national level through her appointment to the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Authority's Horsemen's Advisory Committee. Throughout her service, Linda has remained closely connected to daily life on the backstretch, giving her first-hand insight into the needs of stable workers and their families.

Linda emphasizes the importance of programs that provide practical, accessible support, including the Backstretch Pension Plan, the Horsemen's Health System—which offers access to doctors on live racing days—and the MTHA's annual health fairs. She views these services as essential to the well-being of the workforce that keeps racing operating every day.

"I'm glad we've made a lot of progress with some backstretch issues, but we have a long way to go with things like housing," Linda said.

As Maryland racing moves through redevelopment, Linda believes improvements to the racing product must include better conditions in the stable area. She supports investment in safe, functional facilities and backstretch housing that can improve daily life for workers, support existing stables and help attract new outfits to Maryland.

Owner Candidate

JUSTIN M. WAYSON

Justin Wayson is a Maryland Thoroughbred owner whose connection to racing spans three generations. Childhood trips to the races with his father, Konrad, and his grandfather sparked a lifelong interest in the sport and laid the foundation for his involvement in the family's racing and breeding operation.

For more than 15 years, Justin has worked alongside his father, evaluating pedigrees, purchasing horses at public sales, helping manage the family farm, and assisting with stallion selections. The family's commitment to breeding mares in Maryland has given him firsthand experience with the relationship between a healthy breeding industry and a successful racing program.

Horses connected to the family include Next Girl, campaigned by Konrad Wayson and Wade Meadows through their WWCD partnership, who won the 2025 Claiming Crown Glass Slipper at Churchill Downs. Konrad also bred Bear Force Won, a Maryland-bred son of Bandbox who became a multiple winner at Laurel Park.

Justin has also established his own racing interests. His runners include Dairago, who won a turf allowance at Laurel Park in June 2026 for trainer W. Robert Bailes. That direct experience as an owner complements his years working with the family operation and informs his interest in representing smaller stables and ownership groups.

Introducing others to racing is a particular priority. Justin recently formed a licensed ownership group with friends who might otherwise never have entered the industry. The group is evaluating opportunities to acquire its first racehorse.

"One of the most rewarding parts of racing has been sharing my enthusiasm with others," he said. "Seeing their interest grow has reinforced my belief that making ownership approachable and enjoyable is essential to Maryland racing's future."

Outside racing, Justin is a construction professional with experience in budgeting, contract negotiations, scheduling, and coordinating complex projects involving numerous stakeholders. He hopes to bring that practical approach to the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association Board of Directors as the industry navigates a consequential period of change.

His priorities include clearer communication and greater transparency, attracting and retaining owners, protecting competitive purses and incentive programs, supporting Maryland breeders and the Maryland-bred program, and sustaining opportunities for horsemen at every level.

"I am running for the MTHA Board of Directors to provide a practical, engaged voice for owners, particularly smaller owners and ownership groups whose continued participation is vital to Maryland racing," Justin said. "I believe Maryland racing and breeding share a common future that will require cooperation, accountability, and representation from people actively investing in both sides of the industry."

Owner Candidate

GINA F. ROBB

Gina Robb was born and raised in Thoroughbred racing. Raised under Luigi Gino and married to trainer John Robb, she has been an owner for more than 20 years and a breeder for almost 15 years.

Gina would like to be the bridge that unifies the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association with her skills in communication acquired from multiple disciplines and a degree of the same name from the University of Baltimore.

Gina co-heads No Guts No Glory farm, the Woodbine, Md., operation that was runner-up for Owner of the Year in the 2019 Renaissance Awards and has had multiple individual horses named as Maryland champions over the years.

Based in Maryland, Gina has vastly expanded her business starting from one broodmare to the current 12. Gina more recently has been active in sales outside of Maryland, including in Kentucky. Her success has given her insight into the details of business organization.

Gina has a great passion for the industry that spawned from working in all sectors of Maryland Thoroughbred racing. In addition to breeding and owning, she has spent time as an agent, trainer, hot walker, and even served as a television horseracing analyst from 1998-2002.

In 2022, Gina was elected as a member of the Maryland Horse Breeders Association Board of Directors. She struck an alliance with Talbot Run Equestrian Center and devoted a broodmare and four off-the-track racehorses owned by No Guts No Glory Farm horses to be prepared for the Retired Racehorse Project Thoroughbred Makeover in Kentucky a few years ago.

Gina is actively involved in aftercare and works with youth to help them experience the equine industry.

No Guts No Glory Farm has continued to support the Maryland racing industry by predominately breeding its mares to Maryland sires and contributing to the diminishing population of Maryland-bred horses. Gina hopes to extend this passion to responsibilities as a MTHA Board member.

Gina is an advocate for more negotiations to benefit horsemen and the Maryland-bred racing program. In addition, with her strong attendance on a daily basis at the Maryland racetracks, she plans on being an active voice for Maryland horsemen and working toward the betterment of the overall Maryland racing product to benefit all who participate, or would like to participate, in the industry in Maryland.

Owner Candidate

R. THOMAS BOWMAN

Tom Bowman is a longtime veterinarian, breeder, and leader in Maryland's Thoroughbred industry. He and his wife, Chris, own and operate Dance Forth Farm in Chestertown on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Their operation has earned Maryland Breeder of the Year honors 11 times, most recently for 2023, reflecting decades of success breeding horses independently and in partnership.

Among their most accomplished homebreds is Good Night Shirt, the champion steeplechaser who earned consecutive Eclipse Awards in 2007 and 2008 and was inducted into the National Museum of Racing's Hall of Fame in 2017. Bred by Tom and Chris, he won eight Grade 1 races and earned more than $1 million.

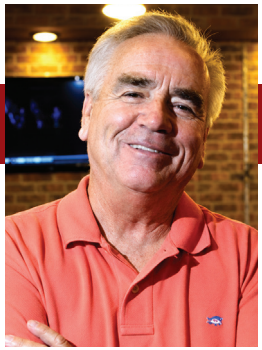
Their breeding record also includes Love of Money, winner of the 2004 Grade 2 Pennsylvania Derby, and Point Determined, winner of the Grade 3 Affirmed Stakes and runner-up in the Grade 1 Santa Anita Derby, both bred in partnership. Other standouts include Smart and Fancy, a multiple Maryland-bred champion, and Double Crown, bred with their daughter Rebecca "Becky" Davis, who won the Grade 2 Kelso Handicap.

More recently, Tom and Chris bred Post Time with their son, Dr. Brooke Bowman, and longtime breeding and racing partner Milton Higgins III. The 2024 Maryland-bred Horse of the Year won the Grade 2 Carter and Grade 3 General George and finished second in the Breeders' Cup Dirt Mile. He now stands at Northview Stallion Station in Chesapeake City, extending the Bowman family's influence into another generation of Maryland breeding.

Beyond the breeding shed, Tom has devoted much of his career to strengthening Maryland racing and protecting its horses. He served multiple terms on the Maryland Racing Commission, advocating for equine health, safety, and welfare. He chaired the commission's Equine Health, Safety and Welfare Advisory Committee, which was included in the 2020 Racing and Community Development Act. Previously, he served on the commission's Safety Advisory Committee, helping implement rules and regulations associated with the Mid-Atlantic Strategic Plan to Reduce Racehorse Fatalities.

A five-time president of the Maryland Horse Breeders Association, Tom also co-chaired the commission task force that authorized Maryland's current breeder and owner incentive program for Maryland-breds. The task force explored ways to expand participation and increase the number of mares bred in the state.

"My biggest concern is the continuing national decline in foal production and the subsequent effect of less horses available to compete in racing," he said. "We may not be able to influence national trends, but we can certainly continue to create programs that will encourage people to produce and race Maryland-bred and -sired horses in Maryland."



Owner Candidate

CHARLES "CHIP" J. REED

Chip Reed brings more than five decades of experience as an owner, breeder, racing fan and horseplayer to the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association Board of Directors. A Maryland native involved in racing since 1974, he pairs a lifelong passion for the sport with extensive experience in business and racetrack management.

Chip and his wife, Randy, own the Corner Stable restaurants in Cockeysville and Columbia, where a distinctive horse racing theme reflects their deep ties to the industry. His business career has also included ownership of a chain of video stores and a travel agency, along with service as vice president of Freestate Raceway, the former harness track north of Laurel.

A 1969 graduate of Towson University, Chip pursued graduate studies in business administration at Johns Hopkins and Morgan State. He also spent two years teaching in Baltimore County schools and taught a freshman college course in advertising and marketing.

Over the years, Chip has worked with trainers Phil Capuano, Phil Schoenthal, Benny Feliciano, Tim Keefe, Dale Capuano and Joan Reynolds. His leading horses include Chip's Dancer, Bold Affair, Johnyz From Albany, Home Run Hitter and Hunka Hunka Lori Z. More recently, he campaigned stakes winner Discreet Ops, who has since joined the broodmare ranks.

On the MTHA Board, Chip has made competitive purses, owner engagement and legislative advocacy priorities. His contributions include serving on the Purse Committee, working on the Fantasy Owners Day project and meeting with lawmakers to protect racing's share of video lottery terminal revenue.

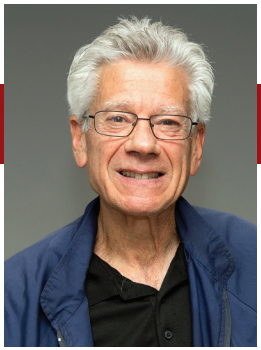
"I've enjoyed the opportunity to turn my love of racing into work that benefits fellow horsemen," Chip said. "Whether we're working on purses, helping people experience ownership through innovative initiatives or meeting with legislators, the goal is the same: to give Maryland racing and the people who invest in it a stronger future."

As an owner and breeder, Chip understands the financial demands and emotional swings that come with the sport.

"You have to love this game to ride out the peaks and valleys," he said. "I know what ownership asks of people, and that's why keeping purses competitive and giving owners a reason to stay involved matters so much to me."

Chip believes lasting progress depends on cooperation among horsemen, racetracks, breeders and lawmakers. He sees the board's range of perspectives as a strength—and a foundation for the work ahead.

"We have a board that brings together experience from across the industry, and I'm proud of the work we're doing," he said. "But there's more to do. We need to keep listening to one another, working together and turning that experience into results for Maryland horsemen."



Owner Candidate

MICHAEL B. SCHEFFRES

Michael Scheffres brings decades of involvement in Maryland racing, a record of building a successful business and a commitment to community service to his candidacy for the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association Board of Directors. An active owner and regular presence at the track, he wants to put that experience to work for fellow horsemen.

Michael founded Scheffres Laundry Service in Beltsville, Md., with his son and two partners, starting with no machines and no accounts. Today, the company employs 40 people, operates more than 23,000 machines and serves more than 800 apartment complexes and condominiums throughout the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area. His community service includes co-chairing Washington-area fundraising efforts for a leading respiratory hospital, helping the organization repeatedly set fundraising records.

"I'm a doer, not just a promiser and talker," Michael said.

Michael's racing operation includes approximately 25 horses in training, primarily with Carlos Mancilla at Laurel Park, and nine yearlings. He also participates in ownership partnerships and previously partnered with Maury Povich. He is active at Thoroughbred auctions and owns a farm in central Maryland, where his wife, Susan, helps care for the horses while also lending a hand at the Laurel barn.

Among his leading runners is Factor It In, a multiple stakes-winning sprinter whose victories include the Dave's Friend and Fire Plug at Laurel Park. He also placed in the Grade 3 Bold Ruler and Fall Highweight in New York. Another standout is Mavilus, winner of the 2022 Maryland Million Distaff Starter Handicap and the 2023 Conniver Stakes after being claimed for $5,000 by Mancilla. Their success reflects Michael's longstanding partnership with his trainer and continued investment in Maryland racing.

His enthusiasm for the sport began at age 16, when his father first took him to Laurel. Nearly six decades later, he still remembers the atmosphere that drew him to racing.

"The crowds were big and the energy throughout the track was electric," Michael said. "I want to hear ideas from everyone on how they believe we can make Maryland racing better."

As a candidate for the MTHA Board, Michael hopes to combine his business experience with that lifelong passion, listen to the concerns of fellow horsemen and help build a stronger future for Maryland racing.

Owner Candidate

CHRISTY L. PAYNE

Cristy (Grimes) Payne's life in Thoroughbred racing began in 1986, when Luigi Gino brought her into the game and onto the backstretch, galloping horses in the early mornings. She went on to ride as an amateur jockey, and that hands-on start grew into a career as a trainer. Over the following years she conditioned horses at Laurel Park and the Bowie Training Center, learning firsthand the demands, rewards, and realities that horsemen face every day.

In 2000, Cristy stepped away from the backstretch to start a family. She then went on to train horses for the Maryland-National Capital Park Police, applying the same patience and horsemanship to a different kind of working animal. Horses she trained were responsible for security at the 1996 Olympic Games, a proud moment in her career.

Today, she is a partner and owner of Noveta Health, where she brings business leadership and management experience to a growing company. After recently relocating to Woodbine, Maryland, with her husband and two children, she reconnected with longtime friends Jerry and Gina Robb, who brought her back into the sport, this time as an owner. She now owns 9 horses in training.

Having worked as an exercise rider, amateur jockey, trainer, and now owner, Cristy understands Maryland racing from nearly every angle. She is seeking a seat on the MTHA Board to support the horsemen, horses, and backstretch community that shaped her life, and to help ensure a strong future for Thoroughbred racing in Maryland.

Trainer Candidate

DANIEL J. MCKENZIE

Danny McKenzie is a third-generation horseman who was born and raised in Baltimore County and has worked with racehorses a majority of his life. The owner of M.I.H. Affiliates started training and owning Thoroughbreds in 2021 and quickly got involved in breeding in Maryland in 2022.

Danny, 38, has three daughters, ages 13, 10 and 6, who are involved in the breeding side of the business. His mother, Lorie Bennett, played a crucial role in helping develop Danny into the horseman he is today. He was breaking babies at age 12 and by age 16 he received his exercise license at Pimlico Race Course. He then rode in point-to-points and also over hurdles at age 18.

The name McKenzie is synonymous with horse racing in Jamaica. Danny's grandmother, Rita McKenzie, was known as the "Lady of Racing," and also made all the silks for racing at Caymanas Park. His father, David "Scorcher" McKenzie, was a jockey who won his first professional race at age 13 and is the oldest jockey to win a race at Caymanas Park at age 69 in 2019, two years after he was inducted into the Jamaica Racing Hall of Fame.

Members of the McKenzie family also were involved in the breeding industry in Jamaica. Danny's uncle, Trevor McKenzie, was the youngest jockey to win a championship, at age 15, which came in 1965 at Caymanas Park. That year, he was recognized as Sportsman of the Year in Jamaica.

While at Pimlico, Danny worked for Kieron Magee galloping horses, and later for Robert Klesaris. At Laurel Park, he was an exercise rider for trainer Katy Voss and under her tutelage also broke babies at her Chanceland Farm.

"I am running for the MTHA Board of Directors because I'm all-in when it comes to Maryland racing," Danny said. "I've invested my entire life in the horses. Nobody needs Maryland racing to succeed more than me. I'm young and known to make it happen. Believe it or not, I'm a chess enthusiast and I really know how to think ahead.

"I learned from the ground up, and it got my foot in the door. I can do the same thing on the board—every decision I make will be for the future of Maryland racing and the people who are invested on a daily basis. I have absolutely no uncertainty about the future of Maryland racing."

Trainer Candidate

PHILIP L. CAPUANO

Phil Capuano brings a multigenerational commitment to Maryland racing and years of hands-on experience to his candidacy for the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association Board of Directors.

Raised in a racing family, Phil learned the business alongside his father, Gary, and uncle, Dale, both longtime Maryland trainers. His late grandfather and namesake, Phil, was an owner, breeder and trainer who helped found the MTHA and remained an active member of the organization.

Phil spent years as his father's assistant, taking on responsibilities that included overseeing a string at Delaware Park. When Dale retired at the end of 2022, Phil took over his uncle's operation, building on the family's racing tradition while establishing his own training career. Based at Laurel Park, he has saddled more than 110 winners since early 2023.

As a candidate for the MTHA Board, Phil emphasizes protecting horsemen's interests, creating opportunities for growth and helping shape a strong future for Maryland racing.

"The MTHA was designed for, and should be for, the protection of horsemen and growing the sport," Phil said. "As a board member, it would be my responsibility to do what's right for Maryland horsemen, growing our sport, and helping further the advancement of Maryland racing."

Among Phil's leading runners is Alwaysinahurry, who gave him his first stakes victory in the 2023 Frank Whiteley Stakes at Laurel Park, marking an early milestone in his independent training career. He also developed Mopo into a stakes winner, capturing the 2026 Jameela Stakes at Laurel. Both Maryland-breds have helped establish his reputation as he builds on his family's racing tradition.

Trainer Candidate

H. GRAHAM MOTION

Graham Motion, a member of the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association Board of Directors since 2014, has built an internationally recognized training career while maintaining deep roots in Maryland. Based at Fair Hill, he has prepared winners of the Kentucky Derby, Dubai World Cup and four Breeders' Cup races, developing a succession of champions and Grade 1 winners through his Herringswell Stables operation.

Born in England, Graham moved to the United States with his family in 1980. He learned his craft working for Hall of Fame trainer Jonathan Sheppard, spent time with Jonathan Pease in France, and later became an assistant to Bernard Bond at Laurel Park. When Bond died in 1993, Graham launched his own stable with horses entrusted to him by two of Bond's owners. Maryland-bred Gala Spinaway helped establish the operation, winning three stakes during Graham's first season. In 2002, Graham moved the stable from Laurel to Fair Hill with his wife, Anita, and longtime assistant Adrian Rolls.

Film Maker delivered Graham's first Grade 1 victory in the 2003 Queen Elizabeth II Challenge Cup at Keeneland. A year later, Better Talk Now brought the stable international recognition by winning the Breeders' Cup Turf. The durable gelding became one of the operation's signature horses, earning more than $4 million before retiring to Fair Hill.

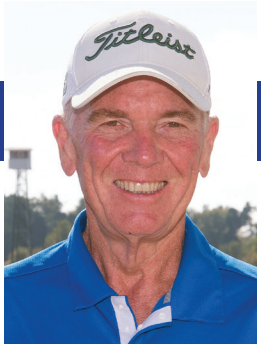
Among Graham's greatest achievements was Animal Kingdom's victory in the 2011 Kentucky Derby. The colt earned that year's Eclipse Award as champion 3-year-old male and returned to the international spotlight by winning the 2013 Dubai World Cup.

Graham's other Breeders' Cup winners include Shared Account, who captured the Filly & Mare Turf in 2010; Main Sequence, winner of the Turf in 2014; and Shared Account's Maryland-bred daughter, Sharing, who won the Juvenile Fillies Turf in 2019. Main Sequence's undefeated 2014 campaign earned him Eclipse Awards as champion older male and champion turf male. Sharing further demonstrated her international quality by finishing second in the 2020 Coronation Stakes at Royal Ascot.

Miss Temple City added another remarkable chapter in 2016, defeating males in both the Maker's 46 Mile and Shadwell Turf Mile at Keeneland before winning the Matriarch Stakes at Del Mar. Graham's success on dirt also includes Irish War Cry, who won the Holy Bull and Wood Memorial before finishing second in the 2017 Belmont Stakes.

More recent standouts include Spendarella, winner of the 2022 Grade 1 Del Mar Oaks, and Trikari, who captured the Grade 2 American Turf and Grade 1 Belmont Derby Invitational in 2024. Their achievements extend a record of developing top-level runners across more than three decades.

Beyond racing, Graham and Anita have supported Thoroughbred aftercare and second careers for retired racehorses, including partnerships with Olympic eventer Phillip Dutton. That commitment, together with Graham's service on the MTHA and Fair Hill Training Center boards, reflects his involvement in the sport both on and off the racetrack.



Trainer Candidate

W. ROBERT BAILES

I am a third-generation thoroughbred trainer with 37 years of experience in the industry, having learned the trade under my father, Mert Bailes. Over the course of my career, I have also worked as a breeder and currently serve as an owner, giving me a well-rounded perspective on all aspects of the sport.

As a graded stakes winning trainer, I finished second in the 2005 Preakness with Scrappy T - perhaps one of the most infamous seconds in the race's history. This summer, I surpassed the $20-million mark in career purse earnings, and last year marked my all-time career high as a trainer, a benchmark I am determined to surpass this year.

I know firsthand how much time and money breeders and owners invest in their horses, which is why the horse always comes first in my track conditions and decisions.

Horsemen need a voice, and I believe I would be a valuable asset to Maryland racing and to the horsemen.

Trainer Candidate

ANTHONY AGUIRRE, JR.

Have you ever heard the saying, "You were born to do this?" For T.J. Aguirre, that feeling has been there his entire life.

At 31 years old, T.J. is a sixth-generation horseman and is now in his seventh year as a Thoroughbred trainer. Racing isn't simply a career to him—it is a way of life. His family has been involved with horses and racing for generations; both of his parents are former jockeys. For generations on his father's side, they rode races and trained racehorses across the United States and Argentina. His mother was a jockey for 17 years and now is the head outrider for The Maryland Jockey Club.

T.J. started at the bottom and worked his way up—from hot walker, to groom, to foreman, assistant, exercise rider, and eventually trainer. Along the way, he took every opportunity to learn from the horsemen around him, gathering different ideas and experiences and developing them into his own approach to training.

His journey as a trainer began with one horse. At 24 years old, T.J. purchased a horse who would later become Benny Havens. He broke him, trained him, and won his first race as a trainer with him. Benny Havens remains by his side today.

T.J. has always believed in being a hands-on horseman. He still gallops his own horses, works closely with his team, and believes that the horses come first. But for him, success isn't measured only by wins and statistics.

T.J. believes Maryland racing is at an important point in its future. The sport needs young horsemen and women willing to step forward, get involved, learn the business, and carry the traditions of Maryland racing into the next generation.

"We need the next generation to step up," T.J. said. "Maryland racing has given my family generations of memories, opportunities, and a way of life. Now it's our turn to help build what comes next. I want to be part of that future. I want to see more young people have an opportunity to make a career in this business, and I want Maryland racing to have a future that the next generation can be proud of.

"The next generation is here. It's time to step up, work together, and build a bright future for Maryland racing."

Trainer Candidate

JASON D. SMITH

Jason Smith brings more than three decades of hands-on experience at Laurel Park and a lifelong commitment to Maryland racing to his candidacy for the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association Board of Directors. His background spans breaking, galloping and training horses, giving him a broad understanding of their development and daily care.

A Maryland native, Jason comes from a family with deep roots in the Thoroughbred industry. His father, longtime Laurel Park trainer Hamilton Smith, was born in South Carolina, where other family members remain active in the horse business.

During his 31 years at Laurel, Jason has learned from accomplished horsemen including Bud Delp, King T. Leatherbury and Katy Voss. A licensed trainer, he also works alongside his father, combining that experience with a firsthand understanding of the challenges facing backstretch workers and horsemen.

Jason's priorities include protecting the safety of horses and riders, listening to horsemen's concerns and helping Maryland racing build a sustainable future.

"As a lifelong resident of Maryland and a lifetime horseman, I have a vested interest in not only seeing Maryland racing survive, but also to thrive," Jason said. "Horse and rider safety, both on and off the track, are of particular concern for me."

As a board member, he would study the issues, listen to the concerns of fellow horsemen and work toward positive changes for Maryland racing.

Jason reached a meaningful milestone in September 2018 when Bay of Rocks, a Maryland-bred son of Great Notion, gave him his first victory as a trainer at Laurel Park. The win carried special family significance: Bay of Rocks defeated two horses trained by his father, Hamilton, including the runner-up.

Trainer Candidate

MICHAEL J. TROMBETTA

Mike Trombetta has built a nationally recognized training career while keeping his operation firmly rooted in Maryland. A longtime member of the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association Board of Directors, he oversees a large stable based at Laurel Park and the Fair Hill Training Center. His horses have won more than 2,400 races and earned nearly $96 million.

Introduced to racing through his father, Mike began working on the Maryland backstretch as a teenager, progressing from hot walker to groom before earning his trainer's license. For years, he maintained a small stable while working alongside his brother in the construction business, steadily building the experience and client relationships that would support his move into full-time training.

Sweetnorthernsaint brought Mike national attention in 2006, winning the Illinois Derby before starting as the Kentucky Derby favorite and finishing second in the Preakness Stakes. Mike has described that horse as the turning point in his career, opening the door to new opportunities and a larger operation.

His leading runners also include Win Win Win, winner of the 2020 Forego Stakes; Wet Your Whistle, who captured the 2019 Highlander Stakes; and Next Question, winner of the 2012 Nearctic Stakes—all Grade 1 victories. Other accomplished horses under his care have included graded stakes winners Global Access, Souper Escape, Eternal Star and Not for Silver.

Mike's longstanding client relationships include Live Oak Plantation, the late breeder and owner R. Larry Johnson and Country Life Farm. He also campaigns horses through his family's R.D.M. Racing Stable.

On the MTHA Board, Mike brings decades of firsthand experience to the challenges facing fellow horsemen. As Maryland racing moves through redevelopment, his priorities include preserving racing opportunities and maintaining a sustainable purse structure.

"With the redevelopment plan underway, we need to figure out the best plan going forward to get the maximum amount of racing days and sustainable purses," Mike said.

Trainer Candidate

A. FERRIS ALLEN

Ferris Allen is a charter member of the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association, having served on the Board of Directors from 1987 to 2002.

Ferris, a current MTHA Board member, received the Outstanding Service to Maryland Horsemen award in 1990 and served as the board's Vice President for 12 years.

Ferris has been an outspoken critic of HISA—its creation, formulation of policy, administration of policy and overall condensation to the industry. He has said horsemen's participation in the process has been window dressing at best, and HISA's vilification of the industry in general and horsemen in particular has been reprehensible.

Ferris considers the establishment of the Backstretch Recreation Program as his most important accomplishment. He was also instrumental as chairperson of the Condition Book Committee in creating protocol that is still in use today, and he pushed hard for the successful Backstretch Pension Program that continues to provide benefits to grooms, hot walkers, exercise riders and trainers.

Ferris, a Virginia native, lives in Clarksville and has resided in Maryland continuously since 1979. His daughter, Jane Allen Blayman, operates Warwick Equine Services, a full-service boarding and foaling service and bloodstock consultancy. After graduating from the College of William and Mary, he taught government and coached baseball and basketball at his hometown Varina High School and spent his off hours training a few racehorses.

A full-time trainer since 1976, Ferris has been a stalwart on the Maryland circuit for more than 40 years and has won more than 2,360 races, trained many stakes winners and won numerous training titles. His stakes winners include Passeggiata, Chrusciki, Palette Knife, Miracle Wood and Wicked Awesome. He is Colonial Downs' all-time-leading trainer, and he led all Maryland trainers in 1999.

Ferris' primary role as an MTHA Board member has been serving as chairman of the Recreation Committee. He led a revival of the program, which has seen a great increase in participation and services offered highlighted by the MTHA Express transportation service for backstretch employees. Ferris also has served on the very important Purse Committee since 2016.

In 2023, Ferris launched the Ferris Allen Bootstraps Scholarship, through which he awards $10,000 a year to a selected candidate with ties to the Thoroughbred industry who is enrolled in or plans to enroll in a four-year college program.

Trainer Candidate

KATHARINE M. VOSS

Katy Voss is a trainer, breeder, and longtime advocate for Maryland's Thoroughbred industry, with a career spanning more than five decades. A founding member of the MTHA, she became its first female president in 2024. She serves as a board member and secretary-treasurer of Maryland Million Ltd. and on the board of The Maryland Jockey Club, the nonprofit entity that operates Laurel Park and Pimlico. She is also a former president of the Maryland Horse Breeders Association.

Katy's roots in racing run deep. Her father, the late John B. Merryman, served on the MTHA Board of Directors and, with her late mother, Kitty, bred and raced a successful stable for many years. Her siblings—Ann, Edwin, and Elizabeth Merryman—have also enjoyed successful training careers in the region.

Her parents bred Twixt, the outstanding mare who helped establish Katy's reputation as a trainer. With Katy also serving as her exercise rider, Twixt won 18 stakes, including the Grade 1 Top Flight Handicap, and earned Maryland-bred Horse of the Year honors in 1973 and 1974. She retired as Maryland's all-time leading money-winning mare and was inducted into the Maryland Thoroughbred Hall of Fame in its inaugural class in 2013.

Katy owns and operates Chanceland Farm, the breeding, training, and rehabilitation facility in Howard County that she developed with her longtime companion, the late Bob Manfuso. An active consignor at Maryland auctions, the farm has produced horses successful on both the regional and national stage.

Among the leading horses Katy and Bob bred together are Aloha West, winner of the 2021 Grade 1 Breeders' Cup Sprint, International Star, the four-time graded stakes winner whose victories included the 2015 Grade 2 Louisiana Derby, and Cordmaker, the Maryland-bred millionaire who won the 2022 Grade 3 General George Stakes. Chanceland also produced 2016 Kentucky Oaks winner Cathryn Sophia, bred by Manfuso.

Home-breds (with Manfuso) she has trained include Wood So, winner of the 1992 Grade 2 Barbara Fritchie Handicap, Saratoga Bob (Maryland Million Classic), multiple stakes winning Las Setas and Corvus (Maryland Million Juvenile). In addition, she has trained more than 20 additional stakes winners including Grade 3 winners Lies of Omission, Polish Holiday and Rugged Bugger.

That experience informs Katy's concern about the rising cost of developing racehorses. She sees owners' ability to recover their investment as fundamental to the industry's future: when fewer people can afford to develop young horses, demand for young stock declines, fewer mares are bred, and racing programs struggle to fill fields. "This downward spiral will continue if we don't come up with solutions and move to implement them as soon as possible," Katy said.

Her primary concern is seeing that Maryland racing successfully transitions to a future with a rebuilt Pimlico and a non-profit operator. Working with the Maryland Stadium Authority to maximize our resources in the redevelopment of Laurel as a first class training center is critical.

The other issue on her agenda is to campaign for allowing Lasix for 2-year-olds and all stakes races with the exception of Grade Ones. HISA's own study concluded that there is no reason to deny Lasix for 2-year-olds. Not allowing Lasix for Grade Ones keeps a level playing field internationally, but denying Lasix for the rest of our better horses is not in the best interest for the safety and welfare of these horses.

Trainer Candidate

BRITTANY T. RUSSELL

Brittany Russell has built one of Maryland's leading training operations since launching her stable in 2018. With horses based at Laurel Park and the Fair Hill Training Center, her runners have earned more than $37 million and won more than 800 races. In 2023, she became the first woman to lead Maryland's annual trainer standings, adding a historic milestone to her numerous meet titles.

Now serving her first term on the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association Board of Directors, Brittany developed her passion for horses while working at local farms near her hometown of Peach Bottom, Pa. After riding in amateur races, she focused on training, gaining experience with Hall of Famer Jonathan Sheppard and accomplished horsemen Brad Cox, Jimmy Jerkens and Ron Moquett.

Maryland-bred Hello Beautiful helped establish Brittany's reputation early in her career. An eight-time stakes winner, the filly captured the Maryland Million Lassie in 2019 and returned to win the Maryland Million Distaff in both 2020 and 2021. Her speed and consistency made her one of the stable's first stars and just the seventh horse to win three Maryland Million races.

Another important early runner was Maryland-bred Whereshetoldmetogo, who won a succession of sprint stakes under Brittany's care, including the Frank Y. Whiteley, Dave's Friend, Not For Love and Delaware Park's Alapocas Run. Alongside Hello Beautiful, he helped establish the stable as a consistent presence in the region's major sprint races.

Brittany's success soon extended to graded stakes competition. Wondrwherecraigis delivered her first graded stakes victory in the 2021 Bold Ruler at Aqueduct. Doppelganger supplied her first Grade 1 victory in the 2023 Carter Handicap, rallying to win at odds of 17-1 and also giving jockey Jevian Toledo his first Grade 1 success.

Maryland-bred Post Time brought further national recognition to the operation. Racing for Ellen Charles' Hillwood Stable, he won the Grade 2 Carter and Grade 3 General George in 2024 and finished second in the Metropolitan Handicap and Breeders' Cup Dirt Mile. He never finished worse than third in nine starts that season, all in stakes, earning $975,000 and honors as Maryland-bred Horse of the Year, champion older male and champion sprinter.

Other notable runners include Full Count Felicia, who won the 2023 Grade 3 Suwannee River Stakes on turf while trained by Brittany, and multiple stakes-winning sprinter Prince of Jericho, whose victories include Laurel's 2025 Fire Plug Stakes. Their accomplishments reflect the operation's growing success with horses competing across different surfaces and distances.

Brittany and her husband, jockey Sheldon Russell, have two children, daughter Edy and son Rye, and are expecting their third. She credits her staff's dedication and her owners' continued investment in quality horses for the stable's success.

"At the end of the day you look at the quality of the stock that we have, and I feel like each year it has gotten a little better," Brittany said. "We're trying to find those good ones and win races with them and hopefully we can keep our clients happy and buying good horses and get them to the winner's circle."

Trainer Candidate

SUZANNE STETTINIUS

Suzanne Stettinius is a lifelong Maryland horsewoman who grew up on her family's horse farm in Baltimore County. Thoroughbred racing runs deep in her family. On the Merryman side, Suzanne comes from generations of Maryland horsemen and trainers, and she grew up riding and working with horses from an early age.

Before becoming a Thoroughbred trainer, Suzanne competed at the highest level of international sport. A graduate of Hereford High School and McDaniel College, she became one of the country's leading modern pentathletes and represented the United States at the 2012 Olympic Games in London.

Suzanne later returned to her racing roots and began training with only a few horses. Since then, she has steadily built her operation into a stable of more than 20 horses. She has developed a particular strength with turf horses and takes a hands-on, individualized approach to conditioning and developing each horse.

Suzanne also works closely with her cousin, trainer and breeder Ann Merryman, training Ann's home-breds and supporting Maryland-bred racing. Their partnership reflects Suzanne's broader commitment to Maryland racing and to creating opportunities for locally bred horses to compete successfully at home.

Suzanne wants to become more involved in shaping the future of Maryland racing and helping guide responsible, thoughtful decision-making for the industry. As both a lifelong horsewoman and a trainer building her business in Maryland, she understands the importance of balancing the interests of horses, owners, trainers, breeders and the people who make the sport possible. She hopes to help ensure that racing in Maryland remains a healthy, sustainable sport and endeavor for everyone who is passionate about it.

Trainer Candidate

HUGH I. MCMAHON

Hugh McMahon has spent decades in Thoroughbred racing as a jockey, trainer, and owner. In the early 1990s, he was the leading apprentice jockey in New York. He has been based at Laurel Park for approximately 20 years and has witnessed considerable changes in Maryland racing during that time.

Since 2005, Hugh's horses have won more than 1,200 races and earned more than $32 million. Racing as Sola Dei Gloria Stable, he has also won nearly 150 races as an owner, with earnings approaching $3 million. He trains for several owners, including Larry Rabold, who has ranked among Maryland's leading owners by wins for many years.

Hugh served on the MTHA Board of Directors in the late 2010s, working on issues such as claiming rules and therapeutic medication. He is seeking to return to the board because he believes the industry needs to examine where it is headed and what can be done to turn things around.

He hopes to help revitalize Thoroughbred racing, which has been contracting for decades.

"I want to see reformation and revival not just in Maryland, but in the overall racing industry," Hugh said. "Horse racing is something I love, and something I want celebrated. It would be nice to recover that."

Hugh believes some decisions made over the past decade have contributed to the sport's current challenges. "I would like to be part of the solution," he said. "If my voice can be an influence for good, I want to be part of the equation."

He also believes divisions among horsemen in Maryland and other jurisdictions undermine efforts to strengthen and grow the Thoroughbred industry.

"I would like there to ultimately be peace and unity and would like to be part of the effort to get everyone to come together," he said.

Trainer Candidate

DANIEL G. EUBANKS

Dan Eubanks got hooked on Thoroughbred racing at the age of 10 through his parents' racehorse, Hillbizon, who won the 1980 Annapolis Handicap at Bowie Race Course. His first successful claim, Darling's Bid, went on to finish second in the 1999 Toes Knows Stakes at Laurel Park.

For many years, Dan has raced under the name Rising Sun Racing Stable and has raced in partnerships with various owners. One of them is his mother, Annette, who earlier this year garnered her 500th victory as a trainer.

Dan, who lives in Arnold, Md., also works as an executive with First Fidelity. Earlier this year, he added to his duties by taking over the training of the family's horses.

"We had a decent stable that was doing well and has had good horses, but my mom was unable to come to the barn on a regular basis," Dan said. "I stepped up to help. If I was going to be at the track all time I thought I'd just bring in the horses I had with other trainers. I started out with 12 stalls and now we're at about 20."

Dan won his first race as a trainer in his first start in mid-March, and through early October had 13 wins, five seconds and six thirds for earnings of more than $456,000. And while he was assisting his mother earlier in the year, the stable won another eight races for earnings of $238,000.

"I really enjoy it," Dan said of training. "The mortgage business has become more challenging, so it's easy to step back and focus on other things. I've been learning a lot in building a stable. I also manage our farm in Lothian on the breeding end and have been fixing it up. I'm trying to stay involved in all aspects of the Thoroughbred business."

Dan said he is running for the MTHA Board of Directors for multiple reasons including working to improve the condition book, which he said has undergone "constant changes—there is nothing consistent about it. I know there is pressure not to run out of town but it's hard not to do so when there are suitable conditions at other tracks."

Dan also said he appreciates the work the MTHA does for backstretch employees but upgrade of the facilities in the Laurel Park stable must be a priority.

"The hot walkers, grooms and riders that take such excellent care of our horses every day need to be taken care of as well," Dan said. "We also need to address the neglected condition of older barns in use. I would relish the opportunity to help improve the backstretch for the workers and our horses. We need to have the proper facilities."

Trainer Candidate

KENNETH M. COX

Kenny Cox began his training career in 1987 at the Bowie Training Center and relocated to Laurel Park a few years before the former was closed due to consolidation in Maryland racing.

Kenny, who lives in Gambrills, Md., with his wife, Kelly Jo, has won more than 400 races, and his horses have earned close to $9.5 million. He has won multiple stakes including the Maryland Million Classic in 2023 with Ain't Da Beer Cold, a winner of more than $469,000.

"My dad owned horses, and one member of his family was a jockey," said Kenny, who currently has 18 to 20 horses at Laurel. "I grew up 10 minutes from Bowie and spent a lot of time at the track."

Kenny is active with the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association Condition Book Committee and said he would like to continue to be involved. He also said outreach is important to him.

"I think there is a disconnect between some board members and the general population on the backside," Kenny said. "I would work to include them in knowing what is going on from the board side.

"One thing I do, and it's very important, is to listen to all sides before making a decision, and when I'm passionate about something I'm not afraid to stand my ground."

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aarbitell@intelliscaninc.com

VOTING INSTRUCTIONS

The MTHA election period runs from December 1 to December 31, 2026. You can review the candidate bios by scanning the provided QR code or by entering the following link into your web browser: *https://mdhorsemen.com/electionprofiles*.

Voting with Paper:

- Completely fill in the box (■) of the choices you select.
- Please select seven candidates in each category. Selecting more or less than seven candidates in either category invalidates your ballot.
- **DO NOT MAIL TO MTHA.**
- Detach ballot and place in the enclosed secrecy envelope. Place the secrecy envelope in the enclosed postage paid return envelope. **THE RETURN ENVELOPE MUST BE SIGNED IN ORDER FOR THE BALLOT TO BE VALID.**
- Mail to:
  MTHA c/o Intelliscan, Inc.
  PO Box 743
  Phoenixville, PA 19460-9937.
- Envelopes must be received no later than December 31, 2026. Please allow sufficient time for delivery.

Voting Online:

- Go to https://elections.intelliscanvotes.com/s3/mtha to access the login page of the official MTHA 2026 Election.
- Use your Ballot Control Number (listed above your name and address on this ballot) to log in.
- Carefully follow the online voting instructions.

If you have any questions, please email *aarbitell@intelliscaninc.com* or call 610-935-6172.

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