



**SHOW JUMPING
HALL OF FAME**

Preserving Our Heritage - Honoring Our Legends

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**Lee McKeever and *Albany* Elected to Show Jumping Hall of Fame
To Be Inducted March 1 at Induction Gala in Wellington
*Kevin Babington to Receive International Award***

Lexington, KY – February 5, 2026 – Lee McKeever and *Albany*, Leslie Burr Howard's 1984 Olympic mount, have been elected to the Show Jumping Hall of Fame. **They will be formally inducted during the Hall of Fame's Induction Gala on Sunday evening, March 1, at the Wellington National Golf Club** in Wellington, Florida. Additionally, the Hall of Fame will present its annual **International Award** to Irish Olympic veteran **Kevin Babington**.

Induction into the Show Jumping Hall of Fame is an honor bestowed annually upon select individuals whose accomplishments and contributions to the sport have set them apart and whose influence has had a significant impact on the sport of show jumping and the equestrian community. It is because of their talents, efforts, accomplishments, and what they have brought to the sport, that the Election Committee, comprising some of the nation's top riders, trainers and officials, elected McKeever and *Albany* as the class of 2025.

Lee McKeever



New Show Jumping Hall of Famer Lee McKeever

For the last 38 years, Lee McKeever has been the sport horse manager and closest advisor to six-time Olympian McLain Ward. McKeever has been an indispensable member of Ward's team and has played a key role in Ward's competing in 20 World Cup Finals and 14 major championships, bringing home 13 medals.

Originally from Dublin, Ireland, McKeever started his love affair with horses when he was 12 years old. While still a boy, McKeever left school and found a job as a groom. Shortly thereafter, someone told him that a friend, Jimmy Doyle, could get him a job in America. McKeever came to the U.S. in 1988 and took a job working for Barney Ward at Castle Hill Farm in Brewster, New York.

McKeever oversees every aspect of caring for more than 30 horses at a time and has played a key role in the success of such superstars as *Sapphire*, *Rothchild*, *Antares F*, *HH Azur*, *Contagious*, *HH Carlos Z*, *Clinta*, *High Star Hero*, *First Lady*, and many more. With McKeever at his side, Ward has won 13 medals at the Olympics, Pan American Games and World Equestrian Games, the FEI World Cup Finals in 2017, and many major Grand Prix in the U.S. and around the world.

McKeever is an invaluable source of knowledge not only for Ward and the Castle Hill team, but also for other grooms and horsemen with whom he is more than happy to share his knowledge and expertise. McKeever's success and importance in the industry is recognized around the world and was formally acknowledged in 2018 when he was honored by the FEI with its Best Groom award.

Ward has undying respect and praise for his longtime partner. "He knows the horses better than anybody," Ward said. "He knows just how to have their conditioning and their health, and how to prevent and deal with injuries. There's never been a moment when I doubted that my horses were in anything but the best of care and that they had the best preparation to be ready to compete."

"This has never been a job for me," McKeever says. "It's a way of life." It was at Castle Hill that

McKeever met his wife, Erica, who began working there about the same time he did and who continues to work with him managing all that goes on at Castle Hill. They have two children, a son, Bradlee, and a daughter, Baylee, who has risen through the ranks to compete at the Five Star level while still a Young Rider.

Albany



Albany, with Leslie Burr, at the 1984 Olympic Games

Fine-boned and light on his feet, *Albany* was an amazing horse, both for his performance in the ring and his beautiful personality outside the ring. He was a classic-type Thoroughbred who began his career on the racetrack. The sensitive horse, foaled in 1975, proved more talented over fences than he was on the track, and he became a true star in the show jumping ring. After starting his career with Joanne Kovacs and Jimmy Kohn, *Albany* was purchased for the 1983 season by Debbie Dolan (Sweeney). He was originally shown on the Grand Prix level by her trainer, Leslie Burr (Howard), while the 19-year-old Dolan was still showing in the amateur-owner division.

Following a highly successful career with Burr in the saddle, *Albany* had continued success both nationally and internationally once Dolan moved up to Grand Prix competition. With Burr in the saddle, *Albany* was named the American Grandprix Association (AGA) Horse of the Year in both 1983 and 1984, and he carried Burr to the AGA Rider of the Year title in 1983.

In 1984, the pair won the \$100,000 American Invitational in Tampa Stadium, and they topped the U.S. Olympic Trials to secure a spot on the Olympic team alongside Joe Fargis and *Touch of Class*, Conrad Homfeld and *Abdullah*, and Melanie Smith (Taylor) and *Calypso*. At the 1984 Games in Los Angeles, *Albany* teamed with the others to make history as the first U.S. team ever to win the Olympic show jumping team Gold Medal.

When Burr handed over the reins to Dolan, *Albany* continued his successful career. Over the next few years, the new combination won the Cleveland Grand Prix in 1986 and the Winter Equestrian Festival Challenge Series in 1988. They also had top-five Grand Prix finishes at the National Horse Show and Valley Forge in 1986; at Old Salem, Cleveland and the American Invitational in 1988; and at Palm Beach

and Baltimore in 1989. Internationally, the pair rode on winning Nations Cup teams at the Royal Winter Fair in Toronto in 1987 and at Guadalajara, Mexico, in 1988 and won the Ladies Show Jumping Championship at Windsor, England, in 1989.

When Albany's Grand Prix career came to a close at the end of the decade, his earnings ranked third in AGA history.

Kevin Babington

Riding for Ireland, Kevin Babington has achieved incredible success on the U.S. circuit and internationally. He was part of Ireland's Gold Medal team at the 2001 European Championships, placed eighth individually in the World Championships at the 2002 World Equestrian Games and fourth individually in the 2004 Olympic Games.

He has ridden to victory in many of this country's most significant Grand Prix including the Hampton Classic, Sapphire Grand Prix at Devon, and Grand Prix de Penn National at Harrisburg. He is the only rider to win the Silver Oak Grand Prix three times and he was Grand Prix champion at Lake Placid four times including 2019 when he finished first, second and third!



The Show Jumping Hall of Fame will also honor Irish Olympian Kevin Babington with its International Award

Show Jumping Hall of Fame Inductees

Since 1987, the Show Jumping Hall of Fame has inducted William C. Steinkraus, Bertalan de Némethy, *Idle Dice* (1987); Patrick Butler, August A. Busch, Jr. (1988); David Kelley, Ben O'Meara, Frances Rowe (1989); Arthur McCashin, Kathy Kusner, Brigadier General Harry D. Chamberlin, *San Lucas* (1990); Adolph Mogavero, Whitney Stone, Morton "Cappy" Smith, Pat Dixon (1991); Eleonora "Eleo" Sears, Mary Mairs Chapot, Barbara Worth Oakford, *Snowman* (1992); Dr. Robert C. Rost, Joe Green (1993); Frank Chapot, Gordon Wright (1994); Mickey Walsh, *Trail Guide* (1995); Pamela Carruthers, *Jet Run*, Richard "Dick" Donnelly and *Heatherbloom* (1996); Edward "Ned" King, Bobby Egan and *Sun*

Beau (1997); Fred "Freddy" Wettach, Jr., Melanie Smith Taylor, Johnny Bell (1998); Rodney Jenkins, Sinjon, Franklin F. "Fuddy" Wing, Jr. and *Democrat* (1999); George Morris, Carol Durand, *Touch of Class* (2000); Eugene R. Mische, Lt. Colonel John W. Russell, Bobby Burke, *Untouchable* (2001); Harry R. Gill, Clarence L. "Honey" Craven, *Calypso, Gem Twist* (2002); J. Russell Stewart, Sr., *Main Spring* (2003); *Snowbound* (2004); Michael Matz, *For The Moment* (2005); Conrad Homfeld (2006); Joe Fargis, Karen Golding, Marcia "Mousie" Williams (2007); Dr. John Steele, *Abdullah, Miss Budweiser, Riviera Wonder* (2008); Neal Shapiro, *Balbuco* (2009); John D. Ammerman, Leonard A. King, Jr., *Good Twist* (2010); Jane Forbes Clark, Gabor Nicholas Foltényi, Hap Hansen, Larry Langer (2011); *Starman, Nautical*, D. Gerald Baker, Charles "Sonny" Brooks (2012); Daniel Marks, VMD, Seamus Brady, Steve Stephens (2013); F. Eugene Fitz Dixon, Jr., Major General Guy Henry, *I Love You* (2014); Elizabeth Busch Burke, Katie Monahan Prudent, Susan Hutchison (2015); Anne Kursinski, Fran Steinwedell, Walter Devereux, *The Natural* (2016); Norman Dello Joio, Hunter Harrison, *Authentic, Sympatico* (2017); Peter Doubleday, Robert Ridland, Colonel John W. "Gyp" Wofford, *Bold Minstrel* (2018); Leslie Burr Howard, David Distler (2019), Margie Engle, *Sapphire* (2020); Bezie Madden, Mason Phelps, Jr. (2021); Anthony D'Ambrosio, Linda Allen (2022); Francisco "Pancho" Lopez, *Cedric* (2023); and Laura Kraut, *Sandsablaze* (2024).

The Show Jumping Hall of Fame was organized to promote the sport of show jumping and to immortalize the legends of the men, women and horses who have made great contributions to the sport. The Show Jumping Hall of Fame is located at the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington, Kentucky. Plaques honoring those who have been inducted into the Hall of Fame can be seen at the Horse Park's Rolex Stadium. Mementos and artifacts from the sport's history are on display as part of the Show Jumping Hall of Fame collection at the United States Hunter Jumper Association (USHJA) Wheeler Museum at the Horse Park.

The Show Jumping Hall of Fame is sponsored by CMJ Sporthorse, Hampton Classic Horse Show, Kentucky Horse Park, Lisa Seger Insurance, Markel, Nilforushan Equisport Events, Rood & Riddle Equine Hospital, United States Hunter Jumper Association (USHJA), Washington International Horse Show and Wellington International.

[The Hampton Classic](#) is the prestigious culminating event of the Hamptons' famed summer season. Top jumper and hunter riders from around the world compete for some of the richest prize money in the nation. The Classic hosts more than 100 classes of competition in six rings for horses and riders of all ages and abilities. The Classic also features a Boutique Garden with more than 70 vendors, a wide selection of dining options and a Farmer's Market, all on its 60-acre show grounds.

The [Kentucky Horse Park](#) is the leading tourist attraction for all things "horse" and one of the world's

best equine competition facilities and only park open to the public. The Kentucky Horse Park hosts a handful of events each year such as the Defender Kentucky Three-Day Event, Kentucky Summer Horse Show and BreyerFest.

Backed by a team of equestrian and insurance experts, [Lisa Seger Insurance](#) (LSI) brings “service” back to “customer service” as THE Lifestyle Source for Insurance. The company is associated with the largest and most respected Luxury Insurance Underwriters, serving clients who have more to protect while expecting higher levels of service. LSI can help find coverage for home, auto, fine art and jewelry, horses, and commercial operations.

[Nilforushan Equisport Events](#) is a horse show management company devoted to its mission to produce world-class events that will enhance the West Coast equestrian scene and help to make California a top show jumping destination. Exhibitors can expect great sport, a series of prize money classes and affordable showing options at every event thanks to the inventive style of the Nilforushan management team. Competitors and spectators alike will be treated to a first-class VIP area, festive entertainment experiences and charitable opportunities. Whether you are riding in the grand prix, competing for the first time, supporting from ringside or simply in town for a vacation, we invite you to join us for a day, a week or the entire horse show series!

[Rood & Riddle Equine Hospital](#) began as an ambulatory practice in Lexington, Kentucky, in 1982 and established a full-service equine hospital in 1986. Today the practice is known and respected worldwide for innovative and highly skilled treatment of horses. Rood & Riddle continues their tradition of excellence into the twenty-first century serving as a referral center for horses requiring specialized medical and surgical care and providing ambulatory care for all breeds and disciplines. With the original hospital in Lexington, Kentucky, and locations in Saratoga Springs, New York, and Wellington, Florida, Rood & Riddle maintains an unwavering commitment to quality, both in the care of horses and in our relationships with clients and the community.

The [United States Hunter Jumper Association](#) (USHJA), as the official hunter/jumper affiliate of the United States Equestrian Federation, is a competition-based sport organization that serves our members through educational programs, awards and recognition, communication and rules. They provide a wide array of programs for all hunter/jumper levels and are mindful of the well-being of our equine partners. Additional information is available at www.ushja.org.

Founded in 1958, the [Washington International Horse Show presented by MARS Equestrian™](#) is one of the most prestigious, competitive and exciting equestrian sporting events in North America. Held annually in October, WIHS brings together the finest and most talented horses and riders from across the country and around the world for seven days of top jumper, hunter and equitation competition,

equestrian entertainment, and community and charity events.

Situated in the heart of Wellington, FL, the iconic “Winter Equestrian Capital of the World,” [Wellington International](#) is the proud host of the Winter Equestrian Festival (WEF). This internationally recognized 13-week event is the world’s largest and longest-running hunter/jumper horse show. Every year, WEF opens its gates to thousands of riders from 50 U.S. states and over 34 countries. Spanning more than 111 acres, the Wellington International facility is equipped with 14 competition arenas, over 500 permanent equine stalls, dedicated horse trails, pedestrian paths, and golf cart tracks. Beyond equestrian sports, WEF offers an all-encompassing experience featuring VIP services, unmatched hospitality, versatile event spaces, and world-class shopping opportunities. With an annual contribution of more than \$400 million to Palm Beach County’s GDP and the creation of over 3,700 jobs, the competition’s impact extends well beyond the facility. The Winter Equestrian Festival is a flagship event operated by Equestrian Sport Productions, LLC. For more information visit www.wellingtoninternational.com.

For more information about the **Show Jumping Hall of Fame**, please visit the Show Jumping Hall of Fame website at www.ShowJumpingHallofFame.net.