

Celebrating Accomplishments

Ceremonies Honor TOC's Annual Owner Award Winners

On Saturday, March 15th, the spotlight was on California owners at Santa Anita Park, when TOC honored Southern California winners of its 2007 owner awards. In ceremonies held in the winners' circle between races, presentations were made for Owner of the Year, Horse of the Year, Story of the

Selected to receive this year's Ed Friendly Industry Service Award was longtime California owner/breeder John Harris. The award is presented annually to recognize outstanding contributions and service in the Thoroughbred racing industry. One of the more visible and outspoken supporters of California racing and breeding, Harris is deeply committed to the industry – from his tireless service on racing industry boards to his sustained investment in California's racing and breeding programs. A special ceremony honoring Harris was held Saturday, Mar. 29, at Santa Anita, with TOC Chair, Marsha Naify, presenting the award in the winner's circle following the second race of the day.

"The Year of Synthetic Surfaces in California" was chosen as the 2007 Story of the Year, a new category added this year.

In an effort to make the awards more timely, the presentations – formerly made at TOC's annual meeting at Del Mar in August – were moved to the Spring. A second ceremony is planned for Saturday, April 12th at Bay Meadows Racetrack, where Kevin Kleczka will be honored as Rookie of the Year, and Bob Bone will receive awards in two statistical categories – Most California Purse Money Won and Most California Races Won.

Kleczka became a licensed owner in California in March, 2007, and in the remainder of the year made 17 starts with four different horses on his way to six wins and more than \$100,000 in earnings. Bone's 2007 runners made 267 starts, for 67 wins and earnings of \$1,626,598.

Congratulations to all 2007 award recipients!



Warren and Elise Williamson receiving award for Horse of the Year (Nashoba's Key), presented by TOC Vice-President, Mace Siegel.

Year, and Most Stakes Races Won.

The selection process, which underwent a transformation this year, began with a new Media Selection Committee comprised of representatives from northern and southern California, including track publicity, print media, television, and local handicappers. The winners were chosen by a combined vote of the media committee and members of the TOC board of directors.

Warren Williamson was voted Owner of the Year, and his Nashoba's Key chosen as Horse of the Year. On hand to receive the award were Warren and Elise Williamson, with the presentation being made by TOC Vice President Mace Siegel. Williamson's runners made 28 starts in California in 2007, posting 11 wins, including six stakes wins and earnings of \$1,177,680. Nashoba's Key accounted for seven of those victories, including three stakes, and \$863,460 in earnings in California.

The award for Most Stakes Races Won went to Stronach Stables, whose Citronnade and Sugar Shake garnered a total of seven stakes wins in 2007. The award was presented by TOC Director Pablo Suarez, and accepted by Ron Charles, chief executive officer of MEC, on behalf of Stronach Stables.



Ron Charles accepted the award for Most California Stakes Races Won on behalf of Frank Stronach. TOC Director Pablo Suarez (left), made the presentation and was accompanied by TOC Chair, Marsha Naify, and President, Drew J. Couto.