

THE WHEELER FAMILY
HALL OF FAME

In Recognition of their extraordinary efforts, commitment and dedication to excellence in Horse Showing and the Pennsylvania National Horse Show.

2024

DONALD STEWART

Since 1968, Donald "Don" Stewart has not missed a single Pennsylvania National Horse Show. He also has not missed a beat when it comes to producing some of the country's top horses and horse-and-rider combinations.

Don began riding at the age of 8 in North Carolina, and in the time since then Don has amassed an extensive resume of top results as both a rider and trainer. With accolades including 14 American Horse Shows Association (now US Equestrian) Horse of the Year titles throughout the 80s and 90s, Don's success in the ring followed him to the PA Farm Show Complex and the PNHS.



In 1989, Don piloted Meant To Be to the PNHS Green Hunter Grand Championship, and in 1992, he replicated that win, this time earning the grand championship tricolor aboard Western Prospect. Don also notched numerous Working Hunter Championship wins with Without a Doubt, a horse who continually achieved great success with Don in the irons.



Following Stewart's own victories, he turned his attention largely to guiding students to the same level of top results. From 1999 to 2015, he trained five riders to victory in the prestigious USEF Hunter Seat Medal Final, including Emily Williams in 1999, Lauren

Van Eldik in 2003, Meg O'Mara in 2012, Spencer Smith in 2014 and Kelli Cruciotti in 2015.

"Those were all very exciting," said Don. "Some of them had started riding with me on ponies that we brought along, so that's extra special. We also retired the Winners Stake trophy with Plain Brown Wrapper, who won with three different riders. That was pretty unheard of for that evening competition; that was exciting."



For Don, his induction is particularly meaningful, as the Pennsylvania National Horse Show is a highlight on his calendar.

"Harrisburg has a lot of history. In my lifetime, I've seen it change dramatically, from having the schooling rings outside to now, but that main arena has always been pretty much the same and has survived the test of time," he explained. "It's quite an honor to be selected. I've consistently been here all of these years as a rider or a trainer. It's been a lot of fun, and we always look forward to going to the 'Burg!"