

1998 Melanie Smith Taylor



Melanie Smith Taylor's show jumping achievements are well known. From an early childhood on a farm in her home state of Tennessee, she went on to gain international recognition as both a competitor and a trainer.

While training with George Morris in the early 1970s, Melanie was successful in amateur/owner jumper classes before graduating to the Grand Prix level. In 1978, she earned the American Grandprix Association's Lady Rider of the Year title, and she was also named the AGA's overall Rider of the Year. Her wonderful record that year convinced the AGA that women could perform on completely even terms with men, leading to a decision to discontinue the separate Lady Rider award. To cap off her year, Melanie's mount Val de Loire was named AGA Horse of the Year.

Melanie became one of only two riders ever to win the "Triple Crown of Show Jumping" by winning the American Invitational, the International

Jumping Derby and the American Gold Cup. Melanie was part of the USET's Gold Medal team at the 1979 Pan American Games in Puerto Rico.

At the "Alternate Olympics" in 1980, Melanie won the individual Bronze Medal aboard her beloved horse Calypso. She also placed second that same year in the World Cup Final. She was named the United States Olympic Committee Sportswoman of the Year after winning the World Cup Final in 1982. Riding Calypso, she capped her show jumping career with a team Gold Medal in the Los Angeles Olympic Games in 1984, a year in which she was a finalist for the Sullivan Award which is given to the nation's top amateur athlete.

Melanie retired from active competition in 1987 and continued to serve the horse world as a television broadcaster, course designer, judge and trainer of young riders. She was inducted into the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame in 1982.

