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## **Leslie Howard and David Distler Inducted into Show Jumping Hall of Fame** ***Last Year's Cancelled Ceremony Held at Winter Equestrian Festival in Wellington***

*Lexington, KY – March 17, 2021 – Olympic Gold and Silver Medalist Leslie Burr Howard and David Distler, an Olympic judge and longtime FEI Steward General, were inducted into the Show Jumping Hall of Fame in a ceremony at the Winter Equestrian Festival in Wellington, Florida on Saturday, March 13. While no spectators were present, the ceremony, originally scheduled to be held at last year's Devon Horse Show but postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, was broadcast live as part of the event's Livestream.*

Induction into the Show Jumping Hall of Fame is an honor bestowed annually upon select individuals whose 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 Howard and Distler as the class of 2019.

### **Leslie Burr Howard**

For over five decades, Leslie Burr Howard has been one of the most competitive and beloved show jumping icons in the nation. With a slew of grand prix victories, titles, and accolades to her credit, 'Leapin Leslie' was an integral part of U. S. teams that won the team Gold Medal at the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles and the team Silver at the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta. She also won team Gold and Silver medals in the Pan American Games and was the 1986 FEI World Cup™ Champion.

By the time she was four, Leslie already knew two things – that she liked horses and she liked speed. She entered her first show at age 6 and in 1972 she won the ASPCA Maclay Finals at just 15 years old, the second youngest ever to do so.

In 1983, Leslie was part of the Gold medal U.S. team with *Boing* at the 1983 Pan American Games in Caracas, Venezuela. She was also named the American Grandprix Association (AGA) Rider of the Year and her eventual Olympic mount, *Albany*, was Horse of the Year, a feat he repeated in 1984.

In 1986, she won the FEI World Cup™ Final in Gothenburg, Sweden aboard *McLain*, and was honored as the AHSA Equestrian of the Year. Over the course of her career, Leslie has competed in 18 FEI World Cup™ Finals and she is one of only five female champions in the event's 41-year history.

One of Leslie's career highlights was being named as *Gem Twist*'s rider after Greg Best was injured. She successfully completed the 1992 season, helping *Gem* earn AGA Horse of the Year honors for a record third time. In 1994, Leslie rode *Gem Twist* and *Charisma* to a first-place tie in the USET Show Jumping Championship at Gladstone, NJ and represented the U.S. at the FEI World Equestrian Games™ in The Hague. Riding Jane Clark's *Extreme*, Leslie was part of the U.S. team that clinched the Silver medal at the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta.

In 1997, the USET honored Leslie with the Whitney Stone Cup for long and meritorious service. Later that year, she won the world's richest show jumping event at the Spruce Meadows Masters aboard *Sblieft*. In 1999, with *Clover Leaf*, she helped the USET win the team Silver medal at the Pan American Games in Winnipeg, Canada. She topped the USA East Coast FEI World Cup™ League in 2000, and that summer won the prestigious Queen Elizabeth II Cup at Spruce Meadows. She also earned the Leading Rider Award at the Royal Winter Fair in Toronto. In 2002, she was part of the U.S. Team at the FEI World Equestrian Games™ in Jerez, Spain.

Leslie has taught and influenced many top jumper riders including Molly Ashe-Cawley, Debbie Dolan-Sweeney, Kent Farrington, Judy Garofalo Torres, Lisa Jacquin, Christine Tribble McCrea and Fernando Martinez. A Grand Prix win in 2020 gave Leslie wins in six different decades and she is the only rider to ride on teams under all four U.S. chefs d'équipe – Bert de Némethy, Frank Chapot, George Morris and Robert Ridland. She was honored with induction into the Show Hunter Hall of Fame in 2016 and the Pennsylvania National Horse Show Hall of Fame in 2018.

### **David Distler**

David Distler has devoted nearly five decades to the sport of show jumping. His career has seen him serve in most every role and has seen him rise from in-gate starter to show manager to Olympic judge and FEI Steward General.

David has been part of five Olympic Games – two as a judge (2008 and 2016), one as FEI Steward (2012), one as event coordinator (1996) and one as starter (1984). He has also been part of three World Equestrian Games – two as a judge (2014 and 2018) and one as co-manager (2010). Last April would have been his 13th World Cup Final, six as a judge (including four as Ground Jury president), four as Steward, one as manager, and two as starter.

In addition, David has served as manager of several of the country's biggest and most important horse shows including the USET Show Jumping Olympic Trials, the Devon, Washington International and National Horse Shows, as well as the Winter Equestrian Festival and USEF Show Jumping Talent Search. He has also held many positions, including technical coordinator, at the Lake Placid Horse Shows where he was honored in 2019 for his nearly 50 years of service.

Highly respected for his honesty and integrity, David is regarded as one of the leading show jumping judges in the world. He has served on the jury at some of the world's most prestigious events including the Spruce Meadows Masters, the Dublin Horse Show, the Olympia Horse Show and the Pan American Games in addition to the FEI World Cup™ Finals, World Equestrian Games and Olympics. He had been selected to judge at Aachen last summer before the event's cancellation.

David also serves the sport through his leadership roles with its major organizations including serving many years as the FEI's Steward General for show jumping and as chairman of the USEF Show Jumping Committee. He is also Vice-President of the USHJA and Treasurer of the Show Jumping Hall of Fame.

### **Show Jumping Hall of Fame Inductees**

Since 1987, the Show Jumping Hall of Fame has inducted William C. Steinkraus, Bertalan de Nemethy, 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 Foltenyi, 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).

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 honored with induction 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.

For more information about the Show Jumping Hall of Fame, please visit the Show Jumping Hall of Fame website at [www.ShowJumpingHallofFame.net](http://www.ShowJumpingHallofFame.net).