

# Calais-McMahon Family: Generations of Success

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## Close Family Ties

The love of horses and the skill sets developed by one generation are often passed down to the next. This is true in the case of the Calais-McMahon family. Three generations have succeeded in the Quarterhorse and Thoroughbred industries.

## Philip Calais, Sr.

Philip Calais, Sr. was born in Louisiana with horses as a natural part of his life. He picked up an interest in racing by visiting Evangeline Downs racetrack. He learned how to gallop horses by the time he was sixteen.<sup>1</sup>

In the early 1950's, Calais Sr. embarked on what would become a forty-year career training Thoroughbreds and Quarter Horses. A great deal of his time was spent racing at Evangeline Downs and Delta Downs racetracks in Louisiana.<sup>2</sup>

Equibase website offers a portion of statistics on his later career and lists over 2,000 starts, netting Calais Sr. over \$1.2 million in winnings since the 1990s.<sup>3</sup>

Most notably, Calais Sr. won several graded stakes including:

- 1997 Louisiana QHBA Futurity (RGr. 1)
- 1999 Louisiana Champions Day Classic (RGr. 2)

## Son and Daughter

Philip Calais, Sr. passed away in 2012 but not before he had passed on his passion for horses to his son, Philip Calais, Jr. and his daughter, Sandra Calais. Sandra became an agent for jockeys. Philip Calais, Jr. continued in his father's footsteps as a Quarter Horse trainer. Calais Jr. added to the family's graded stakes haul with wins including:

- 2003 TQHA Sires' Cup Futurity (Gr. 2)
- 2003 Dash for Cash Futurity (Gr. 1)
- 2007 Delta 550 Stakes (Gr. 3)

Equibase credits Calais, Jr. with over 3,500 starts including \$4.6 million in winnings.

## New Branches

Through Sandra Calais' work as an agent, she connected with jockey Charles McMahon who she married. They worked together for eighteen years.<sup>4</sup> McMahon raced both Thoroughbreds and Quarter Horses but it was the latter that brought the most success.

Jockey McMahon earned nearly \$10 million in winnings across 1,500 wins.<sup>5</sup> Working together, Philip Calais, Sr., as a trainer, and Charles McMahon, as jockey, won the 1989 Mardi Gras Futurity.<sup>6</sup>

In all, McMahon charted twenty-four graded stakes wins including:

- 1994 All American Derby (Gr. 1)
- 1999 Louisiana QHBA Futurity (Gr. 1)
- 2000 Texas Classic Derby (Gr. 1)

## Third Generation

With the Calais-McMahon connection completed, the family heritage grew stronger with a third generation horseman. C. J. McMahon, son of Sandra Calais and Charles McMahon, sat on his first horse at two weeks old.<sup>7</sup>

Like his grandfather, C. J. McMahon entered the horse industry at sixteen. Like his father, he carried on the family's switch from trainers to jockeys. He has taken his career in a new route by completing the transition from Quarter Horses to Thoroughbreds.

In 2015, C. J. McMahon ranked eleventh in wins for Thoroughbred jockeys in North America.<sup>8</sup> Since 2011, he has notched over 1,000 total wins and \$21 million in earnings with several graded stakes wins:

- 2016 Super Derby (Gr. 3)
- 2016 Oklahoma Derby (Gr. 3)
- 2016 Texas Mile Stakes (Gr. 3)<sup>9</sup>

C. J. McMahon continues to build upon the growing achievements of the Calais-McMahon family. His record serves as a representation of generations of skill, pride and professionalism within the horse industry. Through his accomplishments, the legacy of this horse family grows stronger with each racing season.

## Sources

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## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Genaro, "C. J. McMahon and the Rise and Fall of the Black Jockey."

<sup>2</sup>Phillip Calais Obituary."

<sup>3</sup>Phillip Calais, Sr. Trainer Profile."

<sup>4</sup>Jockey C. J. McMahon Talks about Getting into Racing.

<sup>5</sup>Charles McMahon Jockey Profile."

<sup>6</sup>American Quarter Horse Association.

<sup>7</sup>Jockey C. J. McMahon Talks about Getting into Racing.

<sup>8</sup>C. J. McMahon Jockey Profile."

<sup>9</sup>American Quarter Horse Association.