

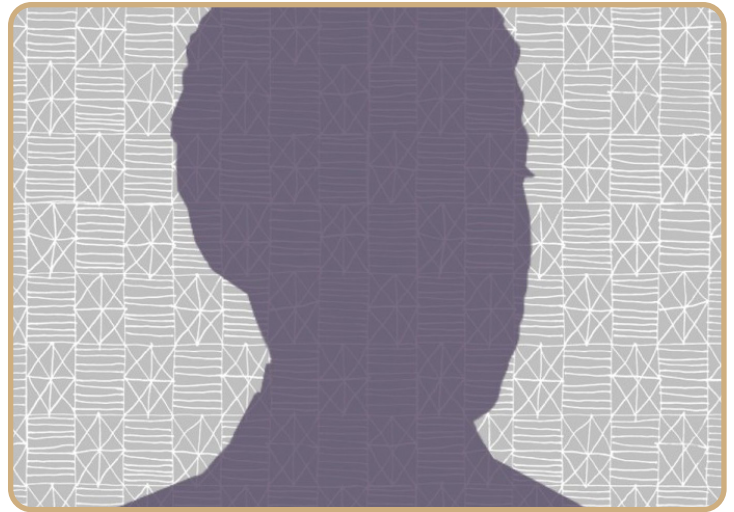
# Martin Leon Brown

**Author:** Michael Phelps,  
Graduate Student Intern

**Places:** Lafayette and New Orleans,  
Louisiana

**Birth:** November 20, 1944 **Death:**

**Professions:** Jockey



## Racing Began in Childhood

"I started when I was seven or eight years old and I'm sixty-seven now," noted Martin Brown in an interview celebrating his long career within the horse industry.<sup>1</sup> Brown's early career consisted of match races followed by dominating performances on the bush tracks of Lafayette, Lake Charles and New Iberia, Louisiana.<sup>2</sup> Speaking of his early career, Brown noted, "In 1962, when I was seventeen-years-old, I came to Fair Grounds [Race Course, Louisiana] to start riding here. I was the only Black jockey and things were tough, but let me tell you, things were tough for all of us back then. If you could ride, then you got a shot, if you couldn't, you didn't."<sup>3</sup>

## Career Comeback

Even with all this early success, Brown considered his greatest accomplishment to be his comeback, "being able to shine for the second time" after he did not ride for over two decades.<sup>4</sup> Brown returned to the track to race in over 1,500 starts with thirty-four wins earning \$783,313 over the last six years of his career.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, 2010 was a difficult year for Brown. In March, Brown suffered a fall and broke his collarbone and then, in September, Brown was diagnosed with prostate cancer, effectively ending his (second) athletic career.<sup>6</sup>

## Legacy and Book

In 2011, Brown officially retired with a race named in his honor courtesy of Fair Grounds Race Course. Upon his retirement, Brown was asked what came next. "One day at a time because right now I am disabled and sit on top of this chair with broken vertebrae, and I am just glad taking it one day at a time." Since then, Brown has had time to reflect on his long career and, in 2018, he decided to share those reflections by publishing a book entitled, *Head Land to the Promised Land: My Life, Love, and Legacy of the Sport of Racing*.<sup>8</sup>

## Sources

"67-Year-Old Louisiana Jockey Martin Brown Retires." 2011. Paulick Report. December 22, 2011. <https://www.paulickreport.com/news/people/67-year-old-louisiana-jockey-martin-brown-retires/>.

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"Martin Brown Jockey Profile." n.d. Equibase. Accessed November 17, 2019. <http://www.equibase.com/profiles/Results.cfm?type=People&searchType=J&eID=118706>.

## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>"67-Year-Old Louisiana Jockey Martin Brown Retires."

<sup>2</sup>"Louisiana Jockey Martin Brown Retires."

<sup>3</sup>"67-Year-Old Louisiana Jockey Martin Brown Retires."

<sup>4</sup>"67-Year-Old Louisiana Jockey Martin Brown Retires."

<sup>5</sup>"Martin Brown Jockey Profile."

<sup>6</sup>"65-Year-Old Jockey Breaks Collarbone."

<sup>7</sup>"Louisiana Jockey Martin Brown Retires."

<sup>8</sup>Martin Leon Brown, *Head Land to the Promised Land*.

