

Cheryl White

Author: Michael Phelps,
Graduate Student Intern

Places: Cleveland, Ohio;
Northern California

Birth: October 29, 1953

Death: September 20, 2019

Professions: Jockey, Steward



Keeneland Library Collection- Cheryl White (3rd from R) with a group of women jockeys at the 1972 Boots and Bows Hdcp.

Childhood and Entrance into Racing

Cheryl White grew up around the horse industry. Her mother Doris, was a horse owner, and her father, Raymond, was a successful owner and trainer. As a jockey, White won five early races aboard horses owned by her mother. Jet magazine featured White on the cover in July 1971 as the first Black female jockey in the nation. The following year, she competed in the 1972 Boots and Bows Handicap at Atlantic City race track. All fourteen riders were women and the horses were fillies and mares.¹

Female Jockey Firsts

White became the first female jockey to win five Thoroughbred races in one day when she raced at the 1983 Fresno Fair. "In my career, I rode about 750 winners. I was the leading Appaloosa rider in America for five years."² Her Appaloosa accomplishments were honored with her induction into the 2011 class of the Appaloosa Hall of Fame.³

Evolving Racing Career

In the 1990s, White retired from racing but did not walk away from a life in the industry. She began serving as a racing official with the California Horse Racing Board. During this period, White's license was briefly suspended for placing a two-dollar bet while working. Yet she never left the equine industry and continued to work exercising horses.

Return to Racing and Legacy

The Bluegrass Black Business Association recognized White as a "Successful African American in the Thoroughbred Racing Industry."⁴ The African American Sports Hall of Fame in Sacramento, California also recognized her with the Award of Merit. White returned to race in Pimlico's Lady Legends for the Cure races from 2010-2014 which was featured in the

documentary JOCK.⁵ More recently, she was honored in the historical presentation at the opening of the Isaac Murphy Memorial Garden.⁶

Sources

"Appaloosa Horse Club Hall Of Fame." n.d. Appaloosa Horse Club. Accessed November 2, 2019. <https://www.appaloosa.com/association/hof.htm>.

Hines, Tina. 2007. "Jockey Cheryl White, An American Missed." Horse-Races.Net. March 18, 2007. <http://www.horse-races.net/library/article-cherylwhite.htm>.

Monaco, Peter. n.d. "The Story of Cheryl White, the First Black Female Jockey in U.S. Horse Racing History." Bet Chicago. Accessed November 2, 2019. <https://betchicago.com/cheryl-white-first-black-female-jockey-horse-racing>.

Neff, Jason. n.d. JOCK: The Female Jockey Documentary. Accessed November 2, 2019. <https://youtu.be/udkB4hgtuTY>.

Footnotes

¹Monaco, "The Story of Cheryl White, the First Black Female Jockey in U.S. Horse Racing History."

²Hines, "Jockey Cheryl White, An American Missed."

³"Appaloosa Horse Club Hall Of Fame."

⁴Monaco.

⁵Neff, JOCK: The Female Jockey Documentary.

⁶Hines.

