

The 2014 Bruce Hamilton award goes to John Manzi

By Tim Bojarski for the Harness Horse Breeders of NYS

Latham, NY---The Harness Horse Breeders of New York State (HHBNYS) has announced with great pride that longtime horseman and journalist John Manzi will be the recipient of the 2014 Bruce Hamilton Memorial Medal. This eighth annual award recognizes an individual who has shown outstanding integrity in the sport of harness racing and has also taken the time to give back to both the sport and their community in the State of New York. John Manzi has been doing exactly that for over 50 years.

Manzi has been involved in harness racing his entire life. Coming from a racing family, he started out training and driving at Monticello Raceway in the early 1960's and enjoyed doing it until 1974. That is when he found something he enjoyed doing even more; promoting the sport. He eventually started working on the other side of the fence at the Meadowlands and in 1980 became Monticello Raceway's full time director of publicity and public relations. 44 years later he still holds the same position.

A tireless fundraiser on his own time, John Manzi has helped numerous industry organizations offset day to day expenses through his benevolent efforts. He has been the impetus for money raised and donated to the Harness Racing Museum and Hall of Fame, the Goshen Historic Track, the Saratoga Harness Hall of Fame, the Standardbred Retirement Fund and the Harness Horse Youth Foundation. As a driving force in the Monticello-Goshen Chapter of the United States Harness Writers Association (USHWA), he runs its annual banquet that honors their local horsemen and then uses the proceeds to fund numerous other worthwhile causes throughout the year.

Besides his promotional work of the sport at Monticello, he has done publicity for the New York Sire Stakes and other New York State races and actually worked for Bruce Hamilton when he was the executive director of the HHBNYS. He is also the publicist for the Billings Amateur Driving Series and the North American Amateur Drivers Association (NAADA).

Manzi has also served high posts for some very important organizations within the racing industry. He is a former National president of both USHWA and the Harness Publicist Association.

John Manzi's efforts have not gone unnoticed through the years as his list of acknowledgments will attest. He is a member of the Communicator's Hall of Fame in Goshen and has received the Proximity Award from USHWA, the Pinnacle Award from the Harness Racing Museum and Hall of Fame, the Appreciation Award from Harness Horsemen International, the Laurel Award from New York City USHWA and was named USHWA'n of the Year in 1992.

Manzi's other passion is music and he is a longtime collector of "doo-wop" and rock and roll records. In 1983 he was given his own radio show called The Bop Shop on WVOS-FM in Monticello. He is currently celebrating his 31st year in broadcasting and can be heard both on the radio and streaming live on the internet.

John Manzi was married to the late Sharon Manzi for almost fifty years and is the loving father of two daughters, Michelle Miller and Tracy Manzi and two granddaughters, Elizabeth Kimand Fiona McNamara.

The presentation of the Bruce Hamilton Memorial Medal will take place at the New York Sire Stakes and USTA District 8 awards dinner at Vernon Downs Hotel and Casino on October 26 at 6:30 p.m. For reservations or more information, contact the Harness Horse Breeders at [518-785-5858](tel:518-785-5858) or info@hhbnys.org.