

James Crawford Awarded Bruce Hamilton Memorial Medal

LATHAM, N.Y.— Harness Horse Breeders of New York State has announced James A. Crawford Jr. as the third annual recipient of the Bruce Hamilton Memorial Medal. This award recognizes outstanding contributions to harness horse racing and improvements of the breeding of Standardbred horses in the State of New York.

Crawford served as the president of Harness Horse Breeders for 22 years from 1985 to 2007. During his tenure he helped direct the organization through the boom breeding times of the 1980s, the more difficult breeding climate of the late 1990s and then the resurgence of the state's breeding program once VLTs were approved and installed earlier this decade.

During these changing times, Crawford was at the helm of making many recommendations to the New York Sire Stakes to preserve and improve the elite racing and breeding program. He was passionate about working with his fellow breeders to identify and address the challenges that arose and find the best solutions for the New York Sire Stakes.

Crawford also worked very closely with Bruce Hamilton, who served as the Executive Secretary of Harness Horse Breeders. The two men spent countless hours working together to benefit New York's racing and breeding industries.

Crawford and his wife, Pat, operated a breeding farm in Canastota, N.Y., beginning in the mid-1970s. Together they bred some of the top horses to compete in the New York Sire Stakes program. Their foundation mare, Gypsy C, was productive for the family and is the great-granddam of Classic Photo, winner of \$1.4 million. Producing top racehorses was a passion shared by the couple.

Before his retirement, Crawford was the CEO of Crawford & Associates, an investment firm outside Syracuse, N.Y.

Crawford passed away on Sept. 28 last year, but his wife of 51 years and his son, Albert, are both continuing the family's involvement in breeding and racing. The Bruce Hamilton Memorial Medal will be presented to Mr. Crawford's family at the New York Sire Stakes/USTA District 8 awards dinner on November 15, 2009, at Vernon Downs.

The Bruce Hamilton Memorial Medal is given to an individual who best exhibits Hamilton's exemplary qualities of character and accomplishment in the harness racing industry. Hamilton served as the Executive Secretary of Harness Horse Breeders of New York State for 18 years. During that time he managed the New York Sire Stakes program masterfully and was able to unite the racing and breeding industries to successfully lobby for VLTs at tracks.