

GAIL CUNARD---EXCELSIOR AWARD RECIPIENT

When the Monticello-Goshen Chapter USHWA holds its 50th Annual Awards Banquet at Kutsher's Country Club in Monticello, NY on Sunday night, October 26 Gail Cunard will be the recipient of the chapter's prestigious Excelsior Award for her untiring dedication to the standardbred sport



Mrs. Cunard has been the Administrator and CEO of the Harness Racing Museum & Hall of Fame since 1985. During her tenure in this position, with the support of the museum president, Elbridge T. Gerry, Sr., and the museum's trustees, she helped to secure the funding and supervise the design and construction of a climate controlled collections storage area and the installation of an elevator.

She assumed the directorship of the institution in 1996. Under current museum president, Elbridge T. Gerry, Jr. and she helped to secure \$6 million dollars in

contributions that modernized the facility as well as enhanced the museum's endowment fund.

Mrs Cunard was the project manager for the renovation which doubled the institutions exhibit space. Included in the new presentation is state of the art computer-driven hands-on exhibitry, energizing award-winning video presentations and educational exhibitry, created to encourage interest in the sport and a knowledge and appreciation for its significant contributions to American culture.

Major accomplishments following this important project include the acquisition of a major collection of Currier & Ives trotting lithographs funded by the Patricia S. Winder Fund, and the conceptualization, construction and management design of a free traveling exhibit, "The Story of Harness Racing by Currier & Ives" (funded by the CTW Foundation), and its supporting exhibit- "What is Harness Racing". This project has, to date, been enjoyed by more than half a million people nationwide and in Canada.

The "Kentucky Connection" was created, designed and installed at the Kentucky Horse Park in 2007 and over 69,000 people visited the exhibit which had a six month engagement in Lexington. The exhibit has since been relocated and is now on display in the museum in Goshen.

Recently Gail has helped to create "A Drive To Win". It was featured at the museum during 2007 and now will be offered, without charge, to interested venues nationwide,

beginning in January 2009. The traveling exhibit (sponsored by Hanover Shoe Farms) honors drivers and trainers whose careers rarely included winning major races, however whose exploits, achievements and courage are worthy of being remembered and celebrated.

A souvenir publication of the exhibit is currently being produced and will be available to museum members in January.

During her entire association with the institution Gail has always been concerned with the protection of the sports important tangible memories and to that end has spearheaded efforts to stabilize, conserve and acquire thousands of dollars worth of important harness racing art.

A major part of the funding for these efforts has been secured by innovating fund raising ventures including a popular annual raffle.

Currently the museum, under Gail's leadership, has embarked on a plan "The Roosevelt Raceway Legacy Project" to identify and digitize articles, including photographs, ephemera and other objects, retrieved from the dying embers of Roosevelt Raceway.

A future exhibit celebrating the "dream track" is planned. Grants from the New York State Council on the Arts are helping to support the project. However donations from those to whom Roosevelt Raceway holds a significant place in their hearts, are invited to help fund this important effort.

Call Gail and pledge your support today!