

WASHINGTON INTERNATIONAL HORSE SHOW INDUCTS DR. BETSEE PARKER INTO WIHS HALL OF FAME

Dr. Betsee Parker has dedicated much of her life to horses, showing, coaching, and sponsoring. She has enthusiastically supported some of the most successful hunter horses and riders in the country, making her the most winning owner of hunter horses and ponies. In 2024, the Washington International Horse Show (WIHS) is proud to induct equestrian legend Betsee Parker into the WIHS Hall of Fame.

Parker has sponsored and helped develop talented horses as well as professional and junior riders to the national level, winning numerous prestigious finals several times including the USHJA International Hunter Derby National Championships, the USHJA Green Hunter Incentive National Championship, and the USEF Pony Finals, and bringing home championships from

the nation's top competitions, including the Devon Horse Show, Pennsylvania National Horse Show, the National Horse Show, and Washington International Horse Show, to name a few.

"I can't believe I'm being inducted into the Hall of Fame with the greats that are in there," said Parker. "It's also an honor because I'm a woman, and there aren't that many women in it. And I'm an owner, not a rider — I had a bad injury and had to stop. Fortunately, I still was able to walk and to train horses, but I've had a very different type of ride to the top than other people did, because I had to get out of the irons a long time ago."

Originally from Middleburg, Va., Parker's equine passion was ignited when she was four. Her uncle took her for a ride on Beauty, the grey Percheron mare he used on his land

when the mud was too deep for the tractor. She became hooked on horses, but when she was 12, she had a bad fall while out hunting that changed the trajectory of her career — and her life.

So afraid that her parents would put a stop to her jumping lessons if the true extent of her concussion and injuries were laid bare, Parker gritted her teeth and carried on riding, albeit in pain. Many years later, she discovered that she had, in fact, broken the C2 and C3 vertebrae in her neck that fateful day. More tragedy came her way when her sister also broke her neck in a riding fall; she died as a result of the accident. Her sister's death galvanized Parker and set her on the path of helping others achieve what her sister could no longer strive for.

"I enjoy helping so many young riders for quite a different motivation than most people have,"



Dr. Betsee Parker (second from left) in the winning presentation for Victoria Colvin and Parker's horse, Patrick, in the 2015 WIHS Equitation Finals.

said Parker. “My younger sister died in my arms that day, and I really wanted to see the completion of what would have happened for her if she had continued the good path she was on as a rider. I felt that something I could do to help me heal would be to help others. Every time I see my young riders go in the ring, I’m absolutely thrilled,” added Parker.

Although her neck injury meant she had to hang up her boots before she turned 30 to avoid any further damage to the area, her drive to help others was overwhelming. Parker deeply believes in young female athletes, and in the power that strong athletic programs can have in building our society’s future leaders. She has contributed to athletics programs at her former school, Southwest High School, to further opportunities for girls in sports.

Parker began showing ponies in 1958 — the same year that WIHS began. She has been attending WIHS since the 1970s.

“Washington has always been the litmus test of horse shows,” she said. “It really is the bellwether horse show because if you can do it there, you can do it anywhere. If you make it at Washington, you really feel that you have given your very finest effort because all the greatest — the champions of the champions — go there, and it’s always a thrill to win.

“Tori Colvin won the WIHS Equitation Finals on my horse Patrick years ago. Last year, Maddie Tosh won it on my horse Daktari. Shawn Casady won the WIHS Pony Equitation Finals on my pony Liseter Clever Star, and Maddie Tosh won on my pony Storyteller. I’ve had four equitation champions just at Washington alone. It’s the toughest equitation final of all of them to win, so if you win there, you’re really excited and proud of your riders,” she added.

One of Parker’s favorite moments at WIHS each year is when she presents the Leading Hunter Rider trophy, and she is delighted that her trainer, friend, and collaborator Scott Stewart has won it more than a dozen times — mostly on horses Parker has owned. Parker is also a supporter of fellow top hunter rider Hunt Tosh.

She has also supported up-and-coming competitors such as Taylor Ann Adams, Taylor Brown, Maddie Darst, Daisy Farish, Ashley Foster, Sophie and



Top professional rider Hunt Tosh and Dr. Betsee Parker enter the ring for an awards presentation.



Dr. Betsee Parker presents the Leading Hunter Rider Trophy, which she donated to WIHS, to Scott Stewart, one the best hunter professionals in history.

Mimi Gochman, Lillie Keenan, Emma Kurtz, Caroline Passarelli, Kirkland Peterson, and many others.

Parker’s extraordinary career includes being an ordained Episcopalian minister, a conservationist, a naturalist, and a decorated first responder leader at the World Trade Center Disaster in 2001. Parker is the 17th Baroness of Locheil in Scotland, graduated with honors from Harvard University in 1985, and was nominated as a United Nations Goodwill Ambassador for her philanthropic work in sustainable development and climate change throughout Africa and at the Vatican.

The WIHS Board of Directors is pleased to add Dr. Betsee Parker to the distinguished family of equestrians in the WIHS Hall of Fame.



ALICE COLLINS, JUMP MEDIA



Since 1997, the Washington International Horse Show Hall of Fame has recognized extraordinary people for their service and dedication to equestrian sport. In 2024, the Washington International Horse Show (WIHS) is proud to induct equestrian legend Betsee Parker into the WIHS Hall of Fame.



WASHINGTON INTERNATIONAL HORSE SHOW HALL OF FAME

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| 2024 Dr. Betsee Parker | 2009 Betty Oare |
| 2023 Sweet'N Low | 2009 Hermen Greenberg |
| 2022 Bezie Madden | 2008 Mignon Smith |
| 2021 John E. Franzreb III | 2007 Sheila Johnson |
| 2019 Robert Ridland | 2002 H. Fen Kollock |
| 2018 Joe Fargis | 2001 Austin Kiplinger |
| 2017 Kathy Kusner | 2000 Sallie & Kenneth Wheeler |
| 2016 Frank Chapot | 1999 Mrs. Jane Dillon |
| 2015 Rodney Jenkins | 1998 William C. Steinkraus |