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MORE THAN 30 YEARS, UNDER 30 STALLS: SALUTING VETERAN TRAINER STEVE MARGOLIS

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Monday, May 27, 2024) – Trainer **Steve Margolis** has been a fixture on the Churchill Downs backstretch for more than two decades. Despite his string of 40-50 horses shrinking to just six this year, Margolis remains determined to rebuild his stable back to the numbers it once was.

“Winning is the best form of advertisement a trainer can do,” Margolis remarked. “It’s been a tough couple of years for us, there’s no hiding that. However, I know I’m still as passionate about this sport as when I started grooming horses out of high school. I’ve been training for now 24 years and I’m continuing to re-invent myself with the way the industry is going.”

The 60-year-old Margolis began his career as a groom at Belmont Park. He then went to work as an assistant for trainers **Howie Teshler** and **Pat Byrne** during the early 1990s then moved to Kentucky to work with **Stan Hough** in the late 1990s.

“I got lucky to work for some great horsemen during my career and learned a lot from them,” Margolis said. “I’ve had a lot of good relationships with owners through the years, too. Sometimes, by luck or other things out of my control, the business relationship didn’t work out. I don’t hold anything against them. Things in life change and I understand that and keep pushing forward.”

Winning became one of the greatest advertisements for Margolis’ career in the early 2000s when **Cajun Beat** was transferred to his barn and went on to win the 2003 Breeders’ Cup Sprint (GI). The speedy Cajun Beat was co-owned by **John and Joseph Iracane**, who sent Margolis the horse to compete in the Kentucky Cup Sprint Stakes (GIII) at Turfway Park then the Breeders’ Cup Sprint.

“He was such a cool horse and I was very grateful for the Iracanes for sending him to Kentucky to me,” Margolis said. “It wasn’t long after Cajun Beat won the Breeders’ Cup Sprint that I started getting horses for the **Klein Family**. He helped open the doors for a lot of things in my career.”

Margolis started training for the Klein family in the late 2000s. The ownership team consisted of late husband-and-wife **Bert and Elaine**, along with their son, **Richard**. One of the most notable horses from the Kleins that Margolis trained was their homebred **Country Day**. The horse made 19 starts with seven victories including wins in the 2010 Hot Springs Stakes and 2012 Colonel Power Stakes.

“I can’t say enough good things about Steve,” Richard said. “I got to know Steve throughout the years on the backside at Churchill. In the late 2000s we were looking at making a change on who trained our horses. Steve is a great horseman and is very knowledgeable about the game. We had a lot of great years together and he trained many of our top horses. We’re still close friends to this day with Steve and his wife, **Sue**.”

Margolis and the Kleins also played a pivotal role in giving trainer **Phil Bauer** his start. Bauer, who used to babysit for Richard while he was in high school, began his career as a hotwalker with Margolis before taking a groom job with **Kenny McPeck** at Saratoga.

While Margolis’ stable does not have the numbers like it used to, he continues to hold his head high and work towards rebuilding his barn.

“Yeah, we’ve gotten a little lean but we’re continuing to have some different things in the works,” Margolis said. “I haven’t forgotten how to train. I don’t hold anything against some of the bigger outfits out there. They’ve worked hard to get the number of horses they had. I’m not done yet.”

Margolis had three of his trainees entered over the next seven days, **Now Ima Believer** in Race 7 on Monday at Horseshoe Indianapolis along with **Gunner Bay** (Race 6) and **Paint Me Perfect** (Race 10) on Sunday at Churchill Downs.

The new series “More than 30 Years, Under 30 Stalls” looks at the careers of trainers who have been in the industry for more than 30 years but train less than 30 horses. Part 1 of the series looked at the career of trainer **Jimmy Baker**. To read his story, visit: <https://www.churchilldowns.com/horses/news/more-than-30-years-and-under-30-stalls-saluting-veteran-trainer-jimmy-baker/>

DOWN THE STRETCH – Monday’s Memorial Day program from Churchill Downs had a 12:45 p.m. ET start and featured the \$250,000 Winning Colors Stakes (GIII) in Race 8. The day also dubbed as Military Appreciation Day where all active and retired service members, with a valid ID, received free general admission. ... Jockey **Cristian Torres** vaulted to fifth in the Churchill Downs standings, winning seven of his last 11 races. Torres rode at Lone Star Park on Monday but will return to Churchill Downs on Thursday ... Following dark days Tuesday and Wednesday, live racing will resume at Churchill Downs on Thursday for an eight-race card and first post of 5 p.m. ... For more information about racing and wagering from Churchill Downs, visit www.churchilldowns.com.

ABOUT CHURCHILL DOWNS RACETRACK

Churchill Downs Racetrack (“CDRT”), the world’s most legendary racetrack, has been the home of The Kentucky Derby, the longest continually held annual sporting event in the United States, since 1875. Located in Louisville, CDRT features a series of themed race days during Derby Week, including the Kentucky Oaks, and conducts Thoroughbred horse racing during three race meets in the Spring, September, and the Fall. CDRT is located on 175 acres and has a one-mile dirt track, a 7/8-mile turf track, a stabling area, and provides seating for approximately 60,000 guests. The stable area has barns sufficient to accommodate 1,400 horses and a 114-room dormitory for backstretch personnel. CDRT also has a year-round simulcast wagering facility and Race and Sports Book. www.ChurchillDowns.com.

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