

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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LONGTIME KENTUCKY-BASED TRAINER ROB O'CONNOR II RETIRES FOLLOWING 39-YEAR CAREER

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Friday, June 14, 2024) – Rob O'Connor II, a fixture on the Kentucky racing circuit for nearly 39 years, has decided to retire from his career as a trainer, marking the end of an era filled with dedication and passion for the sport.

"There are so many people in this game that are unable to retire on their own terms and I'm very fortunate to say I'm able to do so," O'Connor said. "This sport is so special to me and I'm so proud to have built a life in it. I've had a great career and was around so many dedicated owners throughout my time as a trainer. I just can't say enough how lucky I was."

O'Connor took out his trainer's license in the fall of 1985 and recorded his first victory on Jan. 7, 1986 with **Lady Rolls** at Latonia Race Track in Northern Kentucky. Throughout his career, O'Connor tallied 477 wins from 3,696 starters with his horses earning more than \$7.4 million. O'Connor called Churchill Downs home for much of his career, raising his family in Louisville.

In early May, O'Connor saddled his final starter, **Pat'schromecompass**, who finished seventh at Tampa Bay Downs. Since then, O'Connor has transferred the majority of his stable to longtime friend and fellow trainer **Greg Foley**. On Thursday evening at Churchill Downs, O'Connor was in attendance when his former trainee, **Cox Canyon**, made his first start with Foley and upset 1-2 favorite **Tartufo** to win a \$10,000 claiming event.

"I'm just so thankful and thrilled for everyone involved especially his owner **Bruce McCrea**," O'Connor said after the race. "Having my family here with me, along with the entire Foley family here, that's what life is all about."

For the many years, O'Connor trained privately for local businessman **James Bohanon**. One of the top horses the duo had was **American Dynasty**, a multiple stakes winner at Ellis Park and Turfway Park.

"I trained for Mr. Bohanon for nearly two decades," O'Connor said. "It was a true blessing because when I had horses for him, it was when my kids were growing up. I was able to be around my family which was very important."

In his retirement, O'Connor said he looks forward to spending more time with his family including his two young grandchildren **Robert O'Connor IV** and **Parker O'Connor**.

DOWNS AFTER DARK RETURNS SATURDAY FEATURING 'YACHT ROCK' THEME – The final Downs After Dark of the Spring Meet at Churchill Downs is Saturday night and the home of the Kentucky Derby will celebrate the return of summertime with a "Yacht Rock" theme.

Guests are encouraged to dress in nautical-inspired attire – traditional dress codes in premium seat areas will be relaxed – as Churchill Downs stages a summer-inspired nighttime 10-race program beneath the historic Twin Spires starting at 6 p.m. (all times Eastern). Admission gates will open at 5 p.m.

The evening will include musical performances headlined by Monsters of Yacht (8:30 p.m.) with DJ K-Dogg (5:30 p.m.) kicking off the entertainment.

Attendees can also enjoy a roving photobooth, style contests (Best Nautical Chic and Captain's Best) and whimsical art by caricaturists. There also will be signature drinks at the Q Mixers Beachside Party.

The high-class racing includes two stakes events: the \$175,000 Monomoy Girl for 3-year-old fillies at 1 1/16 miles (Race 5 at 7:57 p.m.) and \$175,000 Chorleywood for 4-year-olds and up at 1 3/8 miles on turf (Race 7 at 9:05 p.m.).

The final race of the night is scheduled for 10:42 p.m.

General admission is \$20. Reserved box seats range from \$28-\$38. All-inclusive premium dining packages are \$92-\$179. This includes the new Sports Illustrated Club SI with all-inclusive offerings and direct views into the horse stalls of the new Paddock; the highly sought after all-inclusive Homestretch Club for night racing; and newly renovated Jockey Club Suites for larger private groups. Inquire about all the options at <https://www.ticketmaster.com/churchill-downs-downs-after-dark-tickets> or by calling (502) 636-4450 or emailing groupsales@kyderby.com.

DOWN THE STRETCH – Live racing resumed Friday for a nine-race program and a first post of 12:45 p.m. The program featured a stout \$184,344 carryover in the 20-cent Derby City 6 Jackpot. ... Racing on the Matt Winn Turf Course was held Friday in Lane 3, 24 ft. from the inside rail. Saturday and Sunday's races will be in Lane 1. ... **"Inside Churchill Downs"** returns to the airwaves Friday at 6 p.m. on **ESPN Louisville**. The one-hour program will recap the Belmont Stakes card, look ahead to Saturday's program at Churchill Downs as well as preview next week's Royal Ascot festival with racing analyst **Kaitlin Free**. ... For more information and to purchase tickets, 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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