



## GOOD GRACES

### Grayson-Jockey Club Has Powerful Story to Tell *By Lenny Shulman BloodHorse Daily*

Sometimes a secret is a very good thing to keep. Other times it can be an unwanted by-product of not getting sufficient information to the right people.

After the leaders of the Grayson-Jockey Club Research Foundation conducted a survey four years ago, they determined, with no great pleasure, that the organization was the best-kept secret in the Thoroughbred industry. That is not the most desirable position to be in when you rely on contributions to fund equine medical research that has become, over 35 years, crucial to the well-being of the horse.



photo by Mark Mahon

*Clockwise from top left: Dr. Johnny Mac Smith, Dell Hancock, Ed Bowen, and Jamie Haydon*

Grayson-Jockey Club, after all, has a powerful story to tell. Since 1983 it has provided nearly \$25 million to fund some 350 projects at more than 40 universities around the world, all of it dedicated to helping the racehorse and, by extension, all other horses.

Always Dreaming, the 2017 Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands (G1) winner, was well on his way to retirement this summer due to stomach ulcers. However, because of research funded by Grayson at the University of Queensland in Australia,

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a new medication protocol proved successful for him, and he is being pointed toward a comeback in 2018.

Because of Grayson's funding of Dr. Jim Belknap's research into cryotherapy and its use in treating laminitis, grade 1 winner Paynter beat the disease and is today a promising young stallion; and the superstar mare Lady Eli not only survived laminitis, but returned to her previous grade 1 glory after overcoming the disease and is scheduled now to either continue racing or embark on her next career as a broodmare prospect. Dr. Belknap co-wrote the first definitive book on laminitis and credited Grayson for having funded the foundational research for it.

Going back nearly 20 years, Charismatic, injured in the Belmont Stakes (G1) while going for the 1999 Triple Crown, was treated with the drug xylazine, whose efficacy came out of a study funded by Grayson at The Ohio State University.

You can see why the officers and directors of Grayson want to get the word out to potential donors. The organization spent \$1.5 million funding 19 projects this year. Many of the studies are two-year projects, and the average cost of the research is \$200,000 per project, about double the amount at the turn of the century. Grayson has long embraced a personalized letter-writing campaign tailored to prominent individuals in the Thoroughbred industry. Recently, however, officers of Grayson have employed an initiative in Lexington geared to individual meetings with potential donors.

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"We've been going and talking to people about what Grayson does," said Grayson's chairman, Dell Hancock. "Anybody can have a cocktail party where someone gets up and says 'Grayson is the greatest,' but we prefer to go one-on-one. You take somebody to lunch and talk with them 45 minutes, and when people understand what we're doing, they pony up. We're not raising millions of dollars a year right now, but we're planting the seed so that when we have a major problem like Mare Reproductive Loss Syndrome, people will know us and know how we work if we do need to raise millions for something."

"Health of the horse is everyone's problem, from transport people to owners, farm owners, trainers, and jockeys," continued Hancock, who became interested in equine research following the death of her family's Claiborne Farm Eclipse Award champion Swale at an early age. "We funded a study that showed shipping horses in box stalls led to less shipping fever and coughs. We're working on getting a trainers' circle going. We've received money from jockeys through a check-off system where they can contribute \$1 per mount. Our research is beneficial for everybody."

The original Grayson Foundation was formed in 1940, named after Thoroughbred owner Admiral Cary Grayson, who was the personal physician to President Woodrow Wilson. Grayson was president of a foundation that assisted in the promotion of research for horses. The Jockey Club was an early supporter of that venture and helped raise part of the \$100,000 in seed money. From the beginning, the mission of the organization was to fund research at existing institutions rather than carry out research itself. Prominent horsemen have assured the success of the foundation through the years with their generosity.

The Robert J. Kleberg Jr. and Helen C. Kleberg Foundation donated \$2 million to the Grayson-Jockey Club Research Foundation in 1991. Two years later Paul Mellon donated the \$1 million bonus won by his Kentucky Derby winner Sea Hero in the Chrysler Triple Crown Challenge. Upon his death in 1999, Mellon bequeathed \$2.5 million to the foundation's endowment. In 2004 board member John Oxley pledged \$1 million over four years.

At one time Grayson employed separate committees—one comprising researchers and another practicing veterinarians—to evaluate project proposals. That changed in 1999 under Drs. Gary Lavin and Larry Bramlage, who formed a single 32-member Research Advisory Committee made up of researchers and practicing vets from across the country who come together annually to determine which proposals to fund.

Along with The Jockey Club, the foundation established and underwrote the first Welfare and Safety of the Racehorse Summit in 2006, which has led to advancements such as the establishment of the Equine Injury Database and pre-race vet examinations that most feel have been a factor in the decrease in catastrophic breakdowns in recent years.

The 32 members of the RAC serve voluntarily, except for expenses surrounding the annual meeting at which projects are selected for grants. According to Dr. Johnny Mac Smith, Grayson's consultant representing the medical community, "Our main goal is (to generate) peer-review published articles, and out of approximately 230-plus grants we've funded and tracked since 1999, 195 have reached the published threshold, accounting for 240 papers. According to what I know of other foundations that fund equine research, our results set the bar."

The annual process for awarding grants begins each Oct. 1, the deadline for applications. All research is done through universities so that there are no lab setup costs, making sure the projects are cost-effective. Smith said this year the RAC received 66 applications, which is par for most years. Four reviewers are assigned to each potential grant, with one person selected to present that application at Grayson's annual meeting in January.

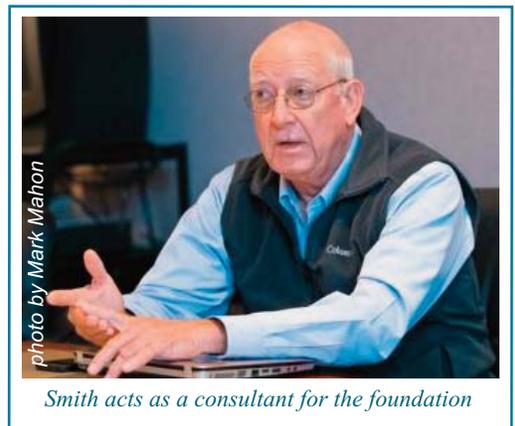


photo by Mark Mahon

*Smith acts as a consultant for the foundation*

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"The composition of the committee includes researchers, practitioners, academicians; they cover the field for all the subjects you're going to see," Smith said. "The people in infectious diseases and internal medicine got slammed with material this year. Some will have 10 or 11 grants to review.

"What's in the headlines will affect the proposals we receive. Front-page news like the EHV-1 outbreak will lead to applications and research. Researchers will respond to the needs of the community." In certain instances the Grayson board will deem a subject important enough to be pro-active in seeking studies.

"Dr. Lavin thought the threats associated with shock-wave therapy were so great—putting horses and jockeys at risk by masking pain—that the board set aside an amount of money and issued a call for people who wanted to submit a project on that, and those were evaluated separately from the other projects," noted Ed Bowen, Grayson's president. "But regardless of the sexiness of a topic of the moment, our DNA is to never fund a project unless the science is excellent.

Conversely, it may be the most wonderful science, but it has to affect the greatest number of horses."



*Bowen (right) is president of the foundation.*

Also, when the Barbaro Fund was initiated after the death of the 2006 Kentucky Derby winner due to laminitis, Grayson was asked to evaluate the projects that were submitted to the Fund.

Proposals are scored on scientific merit, feasibility, budget, impact, and grant-writing. The 32-member committee weighs in on each project, which is eventually scored and then rated head-to-head against each other until the overall funding level is reached. If a proposal needs adjusting in the eyes of the reviewers, it might be resubmitted the following year.

"I've never left Fort Worth (site of the annual meeting) thinking we've funded the wrong thing," said Smith. "Sometimes there are things on the table I wished we'd have had money for, but I feel like we spend the donors' money very wisely. Sometimes we've run out of grants before we've run out of money. That gives you an idea of how critically everything is viewed."

When asked what areas of medicine have yielded the most tangible results from research funded by Grayson, its officers ticked off a litany of topics.

"Sue Stover's research showing that the preponderance of breakdowns came in horses that had existing pathology—up to 90% of them—has been a game-changer," said Bowen. "We have to try to find ways to detect that because once you're doing an autopsy, you can't help that horse."

Added Smith, "We have active grants in the field of biomarkers trying to predict breakdowns; we have grants on imaging that might help detect things wrong with the bone that could predict catastrophic breakdown. We're working on trying to get there, toward a biomarker where you could pull up a blood test and look for inflammatory reactors and conclude a horse needs to be watched closer. The injury database is another area in which you could come up with profiles that could possibly fit the horse that's facing a breakdown. If you can continue to narrow those profiles down, you might get a set of data that helps a vet doing the pre-race exam. But that's off in the distance."

Other active grants are researching the use of different anti-coagulants for the treatment of equine herpes encephalitis; closing in on a viable vaccination for foal pneumonia rhodococcus; detecting and treating placentitis; and studying translational research (medical breakthroughs that can help both equines and humans).

"Awhile back Dr. Wayne McIlwraith got a \$50,000 grant from us to study the equine knee," said Bowen, "and the National Football League determined there were enough similarities to humans that they gave him \$1 million, so our seed money really helped there."

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While it is tricky to assign credit to any one entity or protocol for the decrease in Thoroughbred catastrophic breakdowns in recent years, no one disputes the contribution of the Welfare and Safety of the Racehorse Summit in helping achieve that goal.

"I think it has raised awareness of what's going on and gets the information out in an effective way," said Hancock. "People come knowing they can learn something there that can help them set rules. The claiming rules came out of the first one; you can't have people claiming dead horses. So I think it's helped state commissions set rules."

Jamie Haydon, vice-president of Grayson, added, "The need for an industry laboratory where racetracks could send samples to determine the characteristics of their surface came out of the Summit. That initiative has allowed Dr. Mick Peterson to determine how the surface interacts with the horse's hoof. The Equine Injury Database came out of the Summit and filled a need when the industry couldn't determine how many horses died on the track every year, or why. We've been able to show tracks how to use the information."

Added Bowen, "Barbaro's situation certainly gained recognition for the Summit, which played a role in more state commissions' embracing pre-race vet inspections, which I think has been very important in decreasing catastrophic injuries. I believe Dr. (Mary) Scollay's statistics show that nearly 30% of the horses she scratched (in Kentucky) in pre-race inspections never made another start."

"Necropsy reports, concussion studies, continuing education for trainers, and doctors and horse ambulances on site all came out of the Summit," said Haydon.

Several grants have bolstered Grayson's ability to continue funding research. Lucy Young Hamilton and Richard Klein have stepped forward with initiatives aimed specifically at aiding young researchers. Hamilton, through the Storm Cat Award, and Klein, through his family's foundation and in honor of his parents Elaine and Bert, have bolstered the salaries of post-residency doctors working toward a PhD. One of the benefactors of these awards is on Grayson's RAC

committee today, and another received a grant last year. Of 13 doctors that have received these awards, 11 are still doing equine research, helping fill the pipeline with the next generation of researchers.

On Nov. 13, WinStar Farm announced a program in which 100 guests, for \$50 apiece, can visit the farm Nov. 28, designated as an international day of giving, to meet Always Dreaming, Bodemeister, and Pioneer of the Nile, with all proceeds benefiting Grayson.

It should no longer remain a secret: A dedicated cadre of doctors continue to discover treatments that are helping prevent and cure diseases and injuries in horses thanks in part to funding provided by donors to Grayson. And an equally dedicated staff takes great care in channeling funds to the most appropriate and promising projects.

"Having been associated with the industry since I was 20, it's incredibly gratifying to know you are helping these beautiful, noble horses and can actually sometimes put your finger on specific horses who have been helped," noted Bowen.

"As a veterinarian, it was an honor to be asked to serve as consultant for the foundation," said Smith. "Getting to meet and work with these brilliant young researchers has been really exciting."

Added Haydon, "What hits home with me is my wife has a laminitic horse whom we're constantly monitoring and caring for, so it's very relatable.

This research isn't just for the million-dollar horse; it's also for my wife's horse in the backyard."



*Haydon: "This research isn't just for the million-dollar horse."*

**Donate online at [grayson-jockeyclub.org](http://grayson-jockeyclub.org) or text Grayson to 91999 through 12/312017**

## WINSTAR EVENT A SUCCESS!

By Nathan Mayberg *BloodHorse Daily*

Like Willy Wonka opening up the doors to his chocolate factory, WinStar Farm allowed dozens of starry-eyed racing fans to get a close-up peek at a barn of superstars Nov. 28, including Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands (G1) winner Always Dreaming, as part of a benefit for equine research.

Thanks to research funded by the Grayson-Jockey Club Research Foundation (GJCRF) through the University of Queensland in Australia, Always Dreaming has recovered from a bout with stomach ulcers and is being pointed to a comeback in 2018. He'll stand at WinStar near Versailles, Ky., when his racing career is over.

The Kentucky Derby winner was the star of the show at WinStar on Giving Tuesday as part of a fundraiser for the GJCRF. WinStar Farm donated \$25,000 to the organization and welcomed 100 fans who donated \$50 each to visit Always Dreaming and a lineup of heavyweight stallions including Pioneerof the Nile, Bodemeister, Exaggerator, Speightstown, Super Saver, Distorted Humor, Tiznow, Paynter and recent addition Battle of Midway.



Jay Cash was one of the many fans who had a photo taken with Kentucky Derby winner Always Dreaming

Jamie Haydon, vice-president of the GJCRF, noted that grade 1 winners Lady Eli and Paynter were able to bounce back from bouts of laminitis due to research developments funded by the foundation.

"Always Dreaming came in today for this. He is a little jumpy, so be careful," said Bethany Wurl, WinStar's

marketing coordinator, during the afternoon showing. Always Dreaming, a son of Bodemeister, gave a brief glance at the crowd before turning his attention to the shank held by his handler. Pioneerof the Nile and Bodemeister were also brought out to the center of the stallion barn so fans could come up to pet them and take a photo.

Carly Harling, who works with The Jockey Club near Lexington, had her photo taken with Always Dreaming and called him "absolutely gorgeous. "I'm glad to see they are bringing him back to racing," she said.

The 11-year-old Pioneerof the Nile, sire of Triple Crown winner American Pharoah, gave the impression of perhaps being the strongest of the barn's sires. At 16.2 hands, he is one of the tallest horses there.

Grade 2 winners Fed Biz and Revolutionary stood up at attention with enough energy to bounce back on the track when visited near their stalls, as did Speightstown, the 2004 champion sprinter.

According to Wurl, the stallions are each given a paddock of three to five acres where they graze and rest most of the day and night. They are ridden a half an hour each day when it is not breeding season.

Helen Stevens-Gleason, of Ohio, said her first horse died from colic and laminitis. "This is really important to me," the attendee said about the work of the research organization.

The Grayson-Jockey Club received a public boost this summer when Hall of Fame jockey Mike Smith pledged 1% of his earnings to the foundation on Travers Day and ended up winning the Travers Stakes Presented by NYRA Bets (G1) aboard West Coast.

"The horses give us so much. This is my way to give back to them," Smith said at the time.

Tuesday's event ended with some giveaways, including Always Dreaming's hind shoes and halter. Kathy Maher, a photographer for the Thoroughbred aftercare organization ReRun, won the halter. "I'm just overwhelmed," she said.

***Check out this youtube of the event-<http://bit.ly/2iZzr1o>***

## HOLIDAY SAVINGS ON JUNIOR MEMBERSHIPS UNTIL DEC. 31ST

Our Junior Membership program provides a great holiday gift for that horse crazy child in your life! For the Holiday Season we are discounting our Junior Memberships to **\$35** each versus the regular \$55 each. This special will run through December 31st, so don't miss out!

This program is helping young horse enthusiasts learn about horse health in an interactive way that provides them fun.

Sign up  
your  
Junior  
Member  
today!



Along with supporting equine research, the membership fee provides each member a stuffed pony, an annual membership certificate with their pony's name, as well as a breed card with a photo of one of Admiral's equine buddies, such as Secretariat or the Snowman. The horse's story is on the back of the card. A periodic newsletter, The Grayson Gazette, will be emailed to each member and will highlight tips on the care and management of horses and ponies. There will also be activity pages, recipes and surprises in store for fans. Special contests and sharing horse stories are planned for the future. Junior members also will have access to Admiral's email.

[Click here for our latest Grayson Gazette.](#)

[You can obtain a printable sign up sheet and more information by clicking here.](#)

[You may also sign up your favorite young horse lover online under our Membership page here.](#)

## Helping Lady Eli

“ If Lady Eli could talk, I'm sure she would thank the Grayson-Jockey Club Research Foundation for funding multiple research projects on laminitis.

Grayson funds supported cryotherapy research for combating laminitis.

Cryotherapy likely minimized the devastating effects laminitis could have had on Lady Eli's feet.

Grayson's efforts certainly had a direct impact in helping Team Brown save Lady Eli's life, racing career and legacy. We have a considerable amount more to learn about the treatment and prevention of laminitis.

Grayson's efforts continue to provide veterinarians like myself in the field new tools to save more lives.

**Thank you Grayson!**”

*---Dr. Louis Castro and Bryan Fraley, DVM*



Taylor Ejdy's photo



Grayson-Jockey Club  
Research Foundation