

White Horse Award Nominees



Mike McBride, 24, a veterinary technician and farm worker, was driving onto Meadowbrook Farm in Central Florida when he saw the stallion barn engulfed in flames. A group had removed four stallions from the fire that eventually destroyed five others. But now the roof was fully engulfed in flames and thick, black smoke poured from the building. Though they could hear the cries and thrashing of a horse inside,

MIKE MCBRIDE they knew the barn was near collapse and told Mike he had come too late. McBride decided to go in. Inside, he got to the stall and tried to shoo the horse out. When that didn't work, he managed to latch onto the horse's halter and lead him out. One of those outside compared it to a scene from the movie "Backdraft." Mike emerged through a wall of smoke and flames, leading Reprized.



LEIGH GRAY

Leigh Gray, a former Southern California exercise rider, was the foot person on the horse drawn carriage that carries the Santa Anita patrol judges to their track side towers. Exploding firecrackers caused the team to bolt, throwing the driver from the carriage.

As it raced toward the starting gate, she climbed into the driver's seat, gathered the reins and stopped the runaway horses. Also, when Leigh's riding career ended because of breast cancer, she became a veterinary technician for the Southern California Equine Foundation. There, she convinced veterinary surgeons to perform pro-bono operations on severely injured horses with the stipulation that she perform the after-care at her seven-acre ranch and find them quality homes. To date, she has placed 112 thoroughbreds. She estimates that over half had been scheduled for euthanasia.



CHARLIE MCKAY

Charlie McKay, a long time groom for Canadian Hall of Fame trainer Jerry Meyer, was in his room at Woodbine on the afternoon of August 4, 2002 when he

saw smoke and realized several barns were on fire. While many heroes saved the lives of several score horses that day, the track's HBPA office say McKay was the bravest. According to their reports, Charlie ignored warnings and entered a barn engulfed in flames, then went from stall to stall, making sure that at least six racehorses evacuated their stalls. The fire eventually destroyed 32 thoroughbreds.



ROOSEVELT ROBINSON

Roosevelt "Heavy" Robinson is a popular paddock valet and backstretch worker at Philadelphia Park. Last winter he and his brother were on their way home from work when they saw a car that had wrecked and was on fire. A group had gathered and was trying to remove its female driver who was trapped behind the wheel of a smoking vehicle about to erupt in flames. Heavy raced to

the auto and used his strength to pull the wheel from the woman's chest and extract her. Seconds later, the auto was completely engulfed in flames. Newspaper articles attribute his actions with saving the life of the driver.