

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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To Fly Without Wings: An Evening with Veteran Jockey Jon Court
May 8th, 6 pm, Carnegie Library Center

Since the age of 4, Jon Court has known he would some day become a jockey. From those first thrilling moments on his spring mounted Wonderhorse, to the exhilarating 120 seconds of flying around the track at Churchill Downs, Court has spent a lifetime in a profession he loved. On **May 8th at 6 pm** at the **Carnegie Library Center** (731 College Street, Shelbyville, KY), Court will recount some of his experiences and reveal what he has been up to since retiring from racing in May of 2024. *"To Fly Without Wings: An Evening with Veteran Jockey Jon Court"* is free and open to the public, and is the last program in the 2025 History Matters Speakers Series presented by the **Shelby County Historical Society** in collaboration with the **Shelby County Public Library**.

Court's 43 + year career began in 1980 when he worked his way from exercise rider to riding his first race at Centennial Park in Colorado. From his first mount, Neva's Hope, to his last, League of Legends, Court would ride more than 35,300 races in North America. A bit of a late bloomer, Court, a native of Daytona, FL, rode his first Kentucky Derby at the age of 50 on Archarcharch. At age 61, his victory on Last Samurai in the Oaklawn Handicap would make him the oldest rider to win a million-dollar race in North America. "I think the way most people would see my career is that it was longer than most," he said. "I certainly saw it that way myself."

Court was the recipient of the George Woolf Memorial Jockey Award and Mike Venezia Memorial Award in honor of his sportsmanship, personal conduct and contributions to the jockey community. The George Woolf Memorial Jockey Award is voted on by American jockeys and given to a jockey who demonstrates high standards of personal and professional conduct, on and off the racetrack. He has been active with the Jockey's Guild since 1980 and along with other members, established the Permanently Disabled Jockey Fund (PDJF). While he's had many accomplishments on the track, the creation of the PDJF and its support of close to 50 disabled jockeys is the one that is the most important to him.

A part-time resident of Shelby County since 1997, Court has now settled there permanently since his retirement last year. "Riding in Kentucky was always the goal when I was a younger rider. I've lived half the year here for a couple of decades and when I hung the white pants up, I wanted to come back here and settle for a while. More importantly, my wife really loves it here and has roots in Shelby County that go back to a cousin of Squire Boone's." Learn more about Jon Court and his career on **May 8th at 6 pm at the Carnegie Library Center.**

The Shelby County Historical Society is a 501©3 organization whose mission is to *preserve and promote the knowledge and appreciation of Shelby County and Kentucky history.* To become a member or for more information, contact the Shelby County Historical Society at (502) 513-5555, www.shelbykyhistory.org, or email director@shelbykyhistory.org.



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