

THE STAN BERGSTEIN WRITING AWARD

The Stan Bergstein Writing Award is annually given by Team Valor International to foster the type of writing engaged in by the deceased horse racing giant and hard-hitting racing journalist for whom it is named. After Bergstein passed away in November 2011, the inaugural award was presented the following year. The winning prize from Team Valor International and Barry Irwin is \$25,000.



Submission Information

- Links to stories should be submitted by November 1 to Jeff Lowe at jeff@teamvalor.com.
- Stories must be non-fiction, published in North America between November 1, 2014 and November 1, 2015, and may be written by anyone except persons employed by Team Valor International.
- Articles, Op/Ed pieces, columns, blogs and stories are eligible if they have been published, whether in print or on-line and there are no restrictions as to the type of publication in which they appear.
- Submissions are restricted to articles about horse racing

BARRY IRWIN WANTS TO ENCOURAGE WRITERS TO SHARPEN THEIR FOCUS, TEAM VALOR CEO SEEKS TO KEEP STANLEY BERGSTEIN'S FLAME BURNING

Barry Irwin was hit hard by the death of Stanley Bergstein and it prompted him to inaugurate an award in his memory that will reward an enterprising writer with a \$25,000 prize each year.

“Stan is not the type of writer that can be easily replaced,” Irwin said. “He was in a unique position to write about what was on his mind, as he was a respected leader in racing in North America and he was old enough not to have to worry about repercussions if he ruffled some feathers.

“Most leaders in his field are not inclined to write about things considered to be politically incorrect because they have been part of The Establishment for far too long. But Stan was cut from a different cloth and he had the courage of his convictions.”

Irwin established the Stanley Bergstein Writing Award to motivate writers to produce articles and Op/Ed pieces in the tradition of the honoree and for writers to get out of their usual comfort zone and stretch themselves.

“My wife Kathleen M. Irwin, who is an award-winning fiction writer, says ‘There are two ways to deal with uncomfortable things. One is to sweep them under the carpet and hope nobody notices. The other way is to shine a light on them in hopes that it will better the situation.’ I think that pretty much sums up why we are offering this writing prize,” commented Irwin.

Irwin hopes that the amount of money, which represents one of the largest cash prizes for a writing award in North America and by far the largest ever offered for a Turf Writer, will motivate journalists to come forward with pieces that will make a difference.

“Stan made a difference when he wrote,” Irwin said “because he not only got people to think, he got them to act. He pointed out problems, but he offered solutions. The press has a role in our society that should be taken seriously. It isn’t called the Fourth Estate for nothing!”

Irwin himself has been a writer of articles and Op/Ed pieces that have shined a light on things that needed changing. “I quit working for Daily Racing Form in 1978 when it was more of a house organ for the racing industry than the fine publication it is today,” he recalled. “The first article I wrote after I quit was a lengthy piece in New West, a general circulation magazine in California.

“It was during the time when a minor Mafia member went public in Sports Illustrated, revealing how he fixed races. He named names of trainers and riders. My purpose in writing in New West was to point out that if racing journalists did their jobs, they might shine a light on bad guys and end some unsavory practices.

“In my article, I also revealed practices that took place at racetracks in Southern California. I pointed out what was they did and I named names. I ruffled a lot of feathers, because I mentioned practices used by the biggest names the game.

“Fans and horseplayers loved it, but some racing participants took it badly. I was biting the hand that fed me, I was told. But you know what? Many of the practices I mentioned began to change and eventually disappeared. By establishing this writing award, I want to encourage others to consider taking this path.”

Judges

A panel of five accomplished sports journalists and horsemen is assembled annually to review the submissions and vote on the winner. This year's judges are Randy Moss of NBC Sports, Steve Haskin of the *Blood-Horse*, long- time Turf writer and publicist Lynne Snierson, owner-breeder George Strawbridge and Jon White of Santa Anita Park.

Previous Winners

- 2014: *Thoroughbred Daily News*' Lucas Marquardt for his piece "Is This the Death of Synthetic Racing? And If So, Why?" surrounding the rise, fall and safety of synthetic racetrack surfaces in America.
[Team Valor Headline News: 2014 Stan Bergstein Award](#)
- 2013: Ray Paulick for *Paulick Report*'s "Fla Investigation: Vet Said Cibelli Told Him 'Keep Me Out of It'" covering the case of Tampa Bay trainer Jane Cibelli.
[Team Valor Headline News: 2013 Stan Bergstein Award](#)
- 2012: The *New York Times*' Walt Bogdanich, Joe Drape and Rebecca Ruiz for, "At the Track, Racing Economics Collide with Veterinarian's' Oath", the final story of a three part series. Due to a *New York Times* editorial policy the authors were unable to accept the award, and the \$25,000 was donated to the Racing Medication and Testing Consortium.
[Team Valor Headline News: 2012 Stan Bergstein Award](#)

To learn more about Stan Bergstein follow this [link](#)

To read articles written by Stan Bergstein follow the links below:

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