



PRESS RELEASE

PJA PAYS TRIBUTE TO JOE MERCER

Joe Mercer OBE, former Champion Jockey whose career spanned five decades, during which time he rode more than 2800 winners, has sadly passed away today aged 86.

Joe enjoyed a hugely successful career in the UK which saw him win 2,810 races. Joe was a dual champion Apprentice in 1952 and 1953. He also rode the first of his eight domestic classic winners in 1953 whilst still an Apprentice when Ambiguity prevailed in the Oaks. Joe had a long and successful partnership with Major Dick Hern at West Ilsley with notable winners such as Brigadier Gerard, Highclere, Bustino and Cut Above. Joe also enjoyed considerable success as first Jockey to Henry Cecil, including winning the 1979 Jockeys title aged 44, finishing that season with 164 winners at a strike rate of 26.97%. He retired from the saddle in 1985 after winning the November Handicap at Doncaster on the final day of the season.

Joe was instrumental in the establishment of the Professional Jockeys Association and was one of six jockeys who jointly funded and established the Flat Race Jockeys Association of Great Britain in 1966, prior to the group being amalgamated into the Jockeys Association of Great Britain, of which he was one of the original Vice Presidents.

Paying tribute, Dale Gibson, PJA Executive Director (Racing), said:

“Joe was a loyal and popular jockey who was deeply respected by everyone in the weighing room, noted for his supreme style and fair approach to riding. Rarely seen without a pipe he carried his nickname “Smokin’ Joe” throughout his career. His enthusiasm and love for the game shone throughout his working life as did his passion and commitment to improving things for his fellow jockeys, a cause he dedicated countless hours to. Our thoughts are with his loving wife Anne, children Henry, Sarah and Joe Junior and his grandchildren.”

Monday 17th May 2021