

SIX DECADES AND COUNTING

The **WASHINGTON INTERNATIONAL HORSE SHOW** combines history with innovation for its 60th anniversary.

WHEN THE FIRST horse trots into the ring for this year's edition of the Washington International Horse Show (WIHS), it will be following in the hoofprints of 60 years of horse-show history. WIHS celebrates its 60th anniversary of top equestrian sport in the nation's capital October 10-15, when some of the country's finest hunter, jumper, and equitation riders gather in Washington, D.C.

This year's WIHS will look different in many ways from the first WIHS, held in 1958 at the National Guard Armory. Then, spectators enjoyed viewing saddle-seat riding, carriage horses, and dressage in addition to the hunters and jumpers. The audience was in elegant attire, and evening performances were attended by high society in its black-tie best.

By the 1960s, WIHS had become a must-go event in the fall for riders and fans alike. Luminaries like first ladies Jacqueline Kennedy and Pat Nixon served as honorary chairs for the show, while U.S. Presidents Dwight D. Eisenhower, Gerald R. Ford, and John F. Kennedy looked on as riders from all over the world jumped in the prestigious Nations Cup.

The famous names weren't just in the seats. Legendary riders like Rodney Jenkins, Frank Chapot, George Morris, Kathy Kusner, and others cantered into the ring



Above: The poster for the 1988 show by artist Dagmar Cosby. The current indoor puissance record was set in 1983 by Anthony d'Ambrosio riding Sweet'n Low. Jackie Kennedy attended the WIHS multiple times and presented awards to winners. Rodney Jenkins won the President's Cup Grand Prix in 1983 riding Coastline. Nancy Reagan and Zsa Zsa Gabor chat in the stands.

and into history at WIHS over the decades. The President's Cup Grand Prix and the puissance class have become coveted titles for top riders and favorites for fans. WIHS is still home to the standing indoor puissance record, set at 7 feet, 7½ inches in 1983 by U.S. rider Anthony d'Ambrosio riding Sweet'n Low.

In 2014, WIHS was honored as a U.S. Equestrian Federation Heritage Competition, the highest honor for any USEF show. Over the years, the show has added more exciting competition and entertainment to the schedule, with the Gambler's Choice costume class debuting in 2009 and the Shetland Pony Steeplechase, presented by Charles Owen, starting to thrill crowds in 2013.

With the President's Cup Grand Prix as part of the Longines FEI Jumping World Cup North American League, WIHS offers coveted qualifying points for the 2019 Longines FEI World Cup Jumping Final in Göteborg, Sweden. WIHS also spotlights talented youth in addition to top riders. The Equitation Classic, now known as the Lindsay Maxwell Charitable Fund WIHS Equitation Finals, features the country's top junior riders in one of the most coveted year-end equitation titles.

The WIHS attracts more than 26,000 spectators annually as riders compete for prize money totaling more than a half-million dollars.

EQ + CONTACT INFO | PAGE 97