



## Keeneland: 75 Years of Racing As It Was Meant to Be

*"We want a place where those who love horses can come and picnic with us and thrill to the sport of the Bluegrass. We are not running a race plant to hear the click of the mutuel machines. We want them to come out here to enjoy God's sunshine, the fresh air and to watch the horses."*

-Hal Price Headley, Keeneland Founder and President, 1936

Those words still ring as true today as they did 75 years ago, when Keeneland, the venerable Thoroughbred race course located in Lexington, Kentucky was founded by a group of horsemen lead by Headley. It was an unlikely time to begin an ambitious new venture, with the country still in the throes of the Great Depression.

But, Keeneland's founders were no ordinary men and Keeneland was no ordinary race track.

### Background

Keeneland opened its doors for its first-ever race meet on October 15, 1936. Over the course of the nine-day meet, more than 26,000 fans enjoyed a day at the races and, fortunately, track management nearly broke even on its first foray into organized racing, losing a mere \$3.47 that meet.



More important than the numbers, however, was the fact that Keeneland succeeded despite its rather unconventional ways. The founders had boldly envisioned creating Keeneland as a "model" race course where Thoroughbred racing was showcased at the highest level and profits were not given back to shareholders, but instead, plowed back into the racing program, the facility and the community in the form of charitable contributions. Their unusual concept, they hoped, would make the track immune to economic ills. Their vision has resulted in creating a place that now ranks among venues such as Augusta Golf Course, Wrigley Field and Madison Square Garden as one of the finest sporting locales in the world.

### Story Idea

A multi-media look at Keeneland's unique history through the years, punctuated with stunning photos and video.

### Today

Keeneland has long been a leader in the Thoroughbred industry. As Keeneland celebrates its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2011, much of the original vision outlined by its founders in 1936 remains intact, including an unwavering adherence to tradition while embracing innovation.

Each April and October, Thoroughbred racing continues to be showcased at the highest level, drawing the world's best horses and horsemen. A National Historic Landmark, Keeneland's facility and grounds are breathtaking in both their timelessness and beauty. And, though the years, Keeneland has contributed more than \$18 million to the community and to the industry in the form of charitable contributions.



However, important changes have occurred over the years. Keeneland is a leader in the Thoroughbred industry in both technology and safety. The home for four sales annually, Keeneland is now the world’s largest Thoroughbred auction company, with annual gross sales of about \$400 million.

**Celebrating our 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

To mark our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Keeneland is planning a series of events in 2011, culminating in a special one-night only salute to Keeneland by the Boston Pops on Saturday, October 15. The year-long celebration also includes salutes to Keeneland at the Bluegrass Trust Antique and Garden Show in March and the Keeneland Concours d’Elegance in July.



In addition, Keeneland has developed a series of books celebrating its heritage. Our *Then and Now* book is a unique and stunning pictorial that showcases Keeneland through the years. *Keeneland: A Thoroughbred Legacy* chronicles Keeneland’s fascinating history, including an in-depth look at its founding, its racing and sales programs.

***Keeneland Entertains***

*Keeneland Entertains* tells the “other side” of the story about the love affair fans have with Keeneland—the one that goes beyond the pageantry of the racing or the dizzying sky-high dazzle of the Thoroughbred auctions. Stunningly photographed by award-winning photographer Lee P. Thomas and lovingly authored by Keeneland’s own Fran Taylor, *Keeneland Entertains* showcases the lifestyle that has become an intrinsic part of Thoroughbred racing, breeding and sales in the Bluegrass. The traditions, the fun, the food—it becomes obvious why so many people plan their social calendars around Keeneland.

**Chapter Excerpts Available**  
Chapter excerpts from our *Keeneland Entertains* and *A Thoroughbred Legacy* are available for reprint in publications and on websites.

**Keeneland: A Thoroughbred Legacy**

This 200-plus page hardback book chronicles Keeneland’s fascinating history—going back to the demise of the Kentucky Association Track in 1933 to Keeneland’s founding and opening day on October 15, 1936 to modern-day Keeneland with its emphasis on technology and innovation while adhering to its strong traditions.

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