



Paul McGee

Born: July 10, 1962 in Louisville, Ky.

Resident: Louisville, Ky.

Family: Angela (wife), Maggie (daughter), Matthew, Alex and Eddie (sons).

Paul McGee's record at Keeneland

Total wins: 31

Stakes Wins (3)

- Won 2003 Woodford Reserve Turf Classic (G1) with Honor In War.
- Finished third in the fall 2001 Turfway standings.
- Finished second in the 1999 Churchill fall standings and tied for third in the fall of 2000.
- Saddled Bet On Sunshine to two third-place finishes in the Breeders' Cup Sprint (1997, 2000).

Paul McGee won the second Grade 1 race of his career in 2003, the Woodford Reserve Turf Classic Stakes, with 3rd Turn Stables' Honor In War. It was the first stakes score for Honor In War, who went off at 24-1. McGee also saddled him to win the Arlington Handicap (G3) later in the year.

Former professional football player Will Wolford bought Honor In War for \$140,000 at the 2000 Keeneland September Yearling Sale and then campaigned him in partnership.

McGee and Wolford had been friends in high school in Louisville and would meet at Churchill Downs after classes.

Wolford told *The Blood-Horse*: "Once I retired, I wanted to go to the sales and buy horses in partnership with guys who love it as much as I do. We went to the sales and came away with some pretty nice horses; Honor In War is far and away the best."

Honor In War continued to win stakes as a 7-year-old in 2006. His victory in the Ft. Lauderdale Stakes on Jan. 8 pushed his career earnings to \$1,123,878.

The previous star of McGee's stable had been venerable sprinter Bet On Sunshine, who was retired in 2002. "He was a foundation horse for me and a lot of people associate me with that horse," McGee told John Asher of Churchill in '02. "There's no question there will be a void in the barn now because he was there for so long and he was such a good horse for so long. He's definitely going to be missed, but we knew this time was going to come one of these days. I'm just glad that he retired sound and happy."

As a 9-year-old of 2001, the Bet Big gelding won four of six starts and earned \$331,818. He won the Phoenix Breeders' Cup (G3) for the second time, the Aristides Handicap (G3) at Churchill Downs and the Arlington Sprint Handicap.

"This was one of his best years, as a 9-year-old," McGee said. "He's as good as he's ever been."

When asked how Bet On Sunshine stayed good for as long as he did, McGee replied: "He didn't make his debut until the fall of his 3-year-old year. That's had a lot to do with his longevity. He's only made 42 starts in his career (he subsequently made one more start a winning one at Churchill). For a 9-year-old, that's not many. The biggest factor in how

long he's lasted is that his injuries have been few and far between."

Bet On Sunshine had been a fixture for several years in the Phoenix, also having finished second behind Richter Scale in 1999 and third in both the 1996 and 2000 renewals.

His Phoenix victory in 2001 was his 14th stakes score and was accomplished on owner David Holloway's 71st birthday, Oct. 6. Bought for \$22,000 as an unraced 3-year-old, his earnings topped \$1.4 million. Bet On Sunshine also provided McGee with his first Breeders' Cup starts, finishing third twice in the Sprint—in 1997 and 2000—and unplaced in 2001.

McGee also saddled Accelerant to win the Florence Stakes at Turfway Park and Dream Run to win the Perryville Stakes in 2001.

"Dream Run is a really nice 3-year-old," McGee said in the fall of 2001 about the colt.

The following year, McGee saddled Dream Run to win the Gulfstream Park Breeders' Cup Sprint (G2), Twilight Road to win the Ack Ack (G3) at Churchill, and he also won stakes with Sense of Duty, Miss Pickums, Colonial Glitter and There's Zealous.

"I've got a pretty good client base," he said. "My biggest client now is the Siegel family. They have been a Godsend to me. They are a very good client to have." The Siegels race under Jay Em Ess Stable. McGee also has or previously had horses for B. Wayne Hughes, Motley Crew II, Ralls & Foster, Donamire Farm, John Murphy and Amerman Racing Stables.

In 2000, McGee won three stakes with Bet On Sunshine as well as the Hollywood Starlet Stakes (G1) with the Siegel's I Believe in You and the Golden Rod Stakes (G2) at Churchill Downs with Miss Pickums, also owned by the Siegels. The Starlet was the first Grade 1 victory of McGee's training career.

"Being from Louisville, my Dad was a big racing fan and dragged us along with him to the races at Churchill Downs, Keeneland and Latonia (now Turfway)," McGee recalled. "I always liked going. I looked up to the jockeys and trainers and got their autographs.

"I used to cut the grass at an apartment building where a lot of racetrackers lived. Trainer Jerry Calvin lived there. He suggested I come work for him. I've worked there ever since." He was 15 when he began as a hotwalker at the racetrack.

After graduating from Louisville's St. Xavier High School, he attended Bellarmine College, graduating with a degree in chemistry. "My Dad sells water treatment chemicals," McGee said. "It was kind of a fall back. If it didn't work out at the racetrack, I would go to work for him. He never objected to me coming to the racetrack. He's 100 percent behind me. He still goes regularly to the races."

He galloped horses for Angel Montano, Sr. and Mike Lauer and then worked for Carl Bowman.

Paul was the first of the McGee children to obtain a racetrack job. He has been followed by brother Marty, who is a columnist for *Daily Racing Form*, sister Susan, who formerly worked in group sales at Hollywood Park, and sister Amy, who is married to trainer Ron Ellis and keeps the books for him.

McGee took out his first trainer's license in 1987 and won his first race later that year at Churchill Downs with Pabarene. The following year, he won the first stakes of his career with Balthazar B., whom he had claimed for \$18,000 with two partners. Balthazar B. won the Clark Handicap (G3) in November and the Walter B. Haight Handicap in December. In 1989, he won the Aristides Breeders' Cup at Churchill with former claimer Bet the Pot, and the 1991 Forego Stakes at Turfway Park. Other stakes winners he's trained include Graceful Minister and Come On Get Happy.

McGee is based year-round at Churchill Downs.

"All those kids keep me at home," he explained.

Of the Kentucky circuit, he said: "Having a lot of good trainers here is all part of good competitive racing. The better the competition, the better off we all are. I want to see quality racing here.

"This is all I've ever done," McGee said about training racehorses. "This is the only job I've ever had."

In 2004, his stable won 49 races, including Suave's victory in the Northern Dancer Stakes (G3), and earned \$1,758,830. The following year, his stable won 47 races and \$1,996,263. Suave provided the biggest win when he captured the Saratoga Breeders' Cup Handicap (G2) before running fifth in the Breeders' Cup Classic (G1), beaten about two lengths. "I was real happy with his effort," McGee told *Daily Racing Form* after the Classic, "though it was a shame to run so good and not get a bigger check."

McGee also won two stakes with Eyes on Eddy in 2005. Both Suave and Eyes on Eddy continued their winning ways last year, Suave capturing the Washington Park Handicap (G2), and Eyes on Eddy the Suwannee River at Gulfstream. And Ladyburn scored in the Double Delta Stakes at Arlington.

Equineline.com had McGee with 734 wins, earnings of \$21,396,524 and 21 stakes winners through Jan. 9, 2007.