

ROBERT Z. ADAIR

“I get a thrill every time I win a race,” said jockey Robert “Bobby” Adair in 1973. “I don’t care if it’s a \$1,600 claiming race or the Los Alamitos Championship. It’s a thrill I can’t explain.”

Adair felt that thrill all over the country, from New York to Washington, and 1,705 times alone at Los Alamitos in California. Of his wins at Los Alamitos, 117 were stakes wins and for six consecutive seasons he was the track’s leading rider. He was the first rider in Los Alamitos’ history to win 100 races in a meet, with 103 in 1969.

Adair found great success on other tracks as well. Twice he was runner-up in the All American Futurity and ran third once. His biggest All American connection of late involved the 1993 winner A Classic Dash, which Adair broke to ride.



One of Adair’s most memorable races was the 1972 Los Alamitos Championship, atop of one of the sport’s greatest champions, Kaweah Bar. A two-time world champion, Kaweah Bar was a 6-year-old, and though he was the defending world champion gelding, the “Palomino Express” was not expected to win. Three-quarters of a length to the good proved the champ was not ready to give up the winner’s circle so easily.

Other horses Adair rode include: Band O Angels, a world champion in 1970; Viking Anne, a winner herself and producer of champions; The Plan, a champion in 1981; Don Guerro, a champion in 1974 (and owned by actor Robert Mitchum); and Osage Rocket, another world champion and winner of the Kindergarten Futurity. One of Adair’s favorite mounts was Bobby’s Angel, a filly by Go Man Go out of Band Of Angels that breeder Ivan Ashment named for the jockey.

His thousands of victories included six Champion of Champions, the Kindergarten Futurity and Los Alamitos Championship four times each, the El Primero Del Ano Derby and Kaweah Bar Handicap three times each, and the Golden State Futurity and Derby.

In 1984, Adair retired from the track after he broke his shoulder when a horse fell with him. He was inducted into the American Quarter Horse Hall of Fame in 1999.

INDUCTED INTO THE AMERICAN QUARTER HORSE

*Hall of
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1999