



CYNTHIA NEALE-ISHOY **LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**



Cynthia Neale-Ishoy receives Lifetime Achievement Award

Cynthia Neale-Ishoy of Hannon, ON has been awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award for her unwavering commitment to horses, sport and the community and industry over many decades. This award is given to an individual whose contributions to the Canadian equestrian community are considered exceptional by their peers, and whose long-term service and dedication have contributed directly to the ongoing growth and development of Canadian equestrian sport and industry.

Neale-Ishoy, one of Canada's most successful dressage athletes of all time, was born in Edmonton, Alberta and will turn 71 in June 2023. She began her sports career as a swimmer, but then started riding when she was 12 years old, while her father was stationed on an Air Force base in Germany. Only a few short years later, her international equestrian success was ignited as part of the gold medal team at the 1971 Pan American Games.

A six-time Olympian, Neale-Ishoy was the youngest equestrian at the 1972 Munich Games at just 20 years old and became the first Canadian to win an international dressage Grand Prix in 1979 in Goodwood, England. She then placed seventh at the 1986 World Championships and reached the podium with a second-place finish at the 1988 World Cup in the Netherlands. She then took fourth in the individual class and went on to win a team bronze (with Eva-Maria Pracht, Ashley Nicoll-Holzer and



Gina Smith) at the 1988 Olympics in Seoul. In October of 1993, just three months after giving birth to her second child, she made a remarkable return to competition, winning two gold medals at the prestigious Dressage at Devon in Pennsylvania, USA.

During her competitive years, she had several prominent horses, but none as special as her partner Dynasty (Darling x Marmor), that she won major medals with in 1988. Her beloved dark bay Hanoverian gelding was acquired by her long-time supporters and sponsors Charles and Janet Burns in 1981. Still in the peak of his career, he unfortunately passed away following colic surgery in 1989 at 11 years old, a devastating loss for her and for Canada.

Neale-Ishoy went on to find two other exceptional partners in Dakar, who she was aboard at the 1992 Barcelona Games and Proton who she partnered with in Athens in 2004. In 2010, she was named Canada's Owner of the year for her accomplishments operating Ishoy Enterprises, with her late husband Neil and was named to the Hamilton Sports Hall of Fame in 2017.

"The Lifetime Achievement Award is a meaningful recognition of a lifetime of memories. I am very proud to have represented Canada internationally on multiple teams and am grateful to have had the opportunity to stand on podiums around the world," said Neale-Ishoy.

"Hearing the Canadian national anthem playing was always an emotional reminder of my love of this sport," said Neale-Ishoy. "Being honoured with this award not only recognizes my dedication and passion for Dressage, but also shines light on the incredible dance partners that I've had over the years."

Her nominees for this year's award, of which she received many, cited not only her accomplishments in competition, but her dedication to students and to the future of the sport. "Cindy gives her heart and soul to the sport of Dressage in Canada. She has brought multiple horses to the Olympics, as well as riders. She trains and helps all who need it," one said.

"Cindy is coaching our next generation to success, and I bet our next team medal will have at least one of her students on it! Cindy is an inspiration to all Canadian equestrians," they continued. "Her determination and dedication to the sport is unprecedented. She is a fantastic person and is always willing to share her knowledge with anyone. She is generous, caring and is always willing to go the extra mile to help people."

When asked for remarks, she was quick to ensure she thanked the many people who have supported her throughout her Dressage journey. "My late husband Neil, my daughter Kahla and my son Zachary, for their encouragement, involvement and understanding," she shared. "My dad, who never stopped believing in me and supported me in every way possible, his unwavering faith in me helped me whenever I started doubting myself."

Neale-Ishoy's appreciation was also extended to the Burns' family, training partners and Dressage legends Siegfried 'Bimbo' Peilicke and Willi Schultheis, and all the incredible horses that came into her life. "Lastly," she said, "To Dynasty: thank you for being the partner of a lifetime, thank you for your trust in me and for always giving me 150% and for being my best friend," she concluded.

Neale-Ishoy's involvement with horses has continued long after she stopped competing and continues coaching and offering her talent and knowledge through clinics, inspiring the grassroots to develop and in mentoring athletes of all ages to succeed.



Another nominator spoke specifically of her talents in this regard. “Few coaches have the transient quality which Cindy possesses to allow her to become a true mentor,” they shared. “Cindy has worked tirelessly on the success of her students. She is an amazing coach and goes above and beyond to ensure each rider leaves with the feeling they learned something. She will spend all the time that it takes.” Another sang her praises for her dedication to the future. “She's brilliant, she's generous, and she cares about growing and developing riders and horses here in Canada.”

For wisdom to share with others, she passed on some sage guidance from a lifetime of dedication to equestrian sport. “My best advice would be to keep your head down, develop a strong work ethic and love your horses. Be willing to make incredible sacrifices and learn from your experiences,” she added. “Stay focused, don't let the noise around you make you lose sight of your goals. Dressage is a sport of patience, ebbs, flows and slow progress.”