



FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO MOTORCYCLIST OF THE YEAR AND MORE

BY ROB DINGMAN

One of the greatest things about my job is the opportunity I often get to recognize the great work and achievements of individuals who have done amazing things in the world of motorcycling.

We ran a story in last month's issue about the U.S. Women's International Six Days Enduro World Trophy Team and their victory in Italy at the 95th ISDE. The team was made up of Britney Gallegos, Brandy Richards and Rachel Gutish, and they beat their competition by more than 15 minutes. Congratulations to Britney, Brandy and Rachel for their incredible feat. Each of these talented riders deserves recognition for their amazing efforts.

Brandy Richards, however, did something no ISDE competitor, man or woman, has ever done in the event's 100-plus-year history — she won every single test in her class across the six days of the event! This is a monumental accomplishment that will be difficult for any rider to replicate, even in the next 100 years.

The AMA Motorcyclist of the Year award recognizes the profound impact an individual has had on motorcycling during the past year. It is impossible to overstate the significance of Brandy Richards' achievement, and there can be no doubt that being the first person to accomplish something this impressive certainly made a profound impact on motorcycling in 2021. It is for this reason the AMA Board of Directors has named Brandy Richards the 2021 Motorcyclist of the Year (read more on p.30). Congratulations, Brandy! You earned this honor with your tremendous effort and impressive victory.

While on the subject of recognition

for a job well done, there is a member of the AMA staff I would like to acknowledge for his efforts to help ensure a return to normalcy (or some semblance thereof) as the persistent effects of the global pandemic continue to wreak havoc on our sport.

Over the last two years, travel to and from the U.S. has been difficult, if not impossible. Navigating the frequently changing travel restrictions requires persistence and determination. With all the international riders that come to the U.S. to compete in AMA and *Fédération Internationale de Motocyclisme*-sanctioned events, as well as international series that typically have rounds in the U.S., these travel restrictions had a significant detrimental effect on motorcycle racing in this country.

Since most of the restrictions emanated from the U.S. government, it fell to AMA's Government Relations staff to find a way to keep racing in the face of the global pandemic. Specifically, it was AMA Director of Government Relations Michael Sayre who worked with U.S. Department of Homeland Security and U.S. Customs and Border Protection to find ways to help riders and promoters get themselves, their teams and their equipment into the country (see p.14).

Chief Sporting Officer Carlos Ezpeleta of MotoGP-promoter Dorna told me that bringing the MotoGP series to Austin, Texas, last fall would not have been possible without the assistance of AMA and Michael Sayre. There are countless other riders Mike assisted over the last couple of years that would not have been able to get here without his help. So thanks, Mike, for your efforts



BRANDY
RICHARDS

to facilitate racing in the U.S.!

Finally, I would like to personally pay tribute to an AMA Motorcycle Hall of Famer we recently lost. Two-time AMA Superbike Champion Wes Cooley, whose image graces our cover this month (cover story, p.20), passed away last October from complications of diabetes.

Wes had not really been engaged in the motorcycle community for many years after going on to a career in the medical community. A few years ago, Wes was the grand marshal at AMA Vintage Motorcycle Days. I will always remember how genuinely shocked he was that people still knew who he was and even wanted his autograph. He seemed to have no idea what a big impact he had had on people's lives during his career and beyond. His humility despite his notable accomplishments makes him even more of an icon in my view. Rest in peace, Wes Cooley!

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