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## **MSEDA Invites Equestrians to Attend Special "OTTB Mythbusters" Presentation with Expert Panelists on January 18th**

*By Yellow Horse Marketing for MSEDA*

For centuries and across continents, Thoroughbreds have been legendary for their athletic performance. In addition to being champions on the racetrack, these amazing athletes have carried generations of Pony Clubbers to their first blue ribbons, and have brought glory to U.S. Equestrian Team riders by helping to earn Olympic medals. And even as horse racing and equestrian sport has evolved over the decades, off-the-track Thoroughbreds (OTTBs) have continued to prove themselves in the competitive arena and have even enjoyed a recent resurgence in popularity.



*International event rider Danny Warrington, shown here aboard his off-the-track Thoroughbred "Discover the Power", will join a special panel discussion titled "OTTB Mythbusters" hosted by MSEDA on January 18, 2014. Photo: [www.photosbybailini.com](http://www.photosbybailini.com).*

In response to this growing interest, the Mid-South Eventing and Dressage Association (MSEDA) will host an innovative presentation titled "OTTB Mythbusters" as part of its annual meeting festivities on Saturday, January 18, 2014 at the Marriott Griffin Gate Resort in Lexington, KY. An expert panel composed of international eventer Danny Warrington, farm owner and trainer William "Billy" Wofford, and veterinarian Dr. Kathleen Anderson will discuss everything riders need to know about off-the-track Thoroughbreds, including why someone should consider an ex-racehorse as a new mount; what to expect; searching for the right prospect; pre-purchase considerations; bringing a new partner home; and how to help a racehorse successfully transition from life on the racetrack to a recreational or competitive career.

MSEDA President Mary Fike of Shelbyville, KY explained why she's so excited about this upcoming presentation. "MSEDA's mission is to be an educational-based organization, so every year we try to bring in nationally-known speakers as part of our annual meeting, such as David O'Connor, Jane Savoie, and Denny Emerson," said Fike. "I believe that this year's panel discussion is especially timely, as new incentive programs and rescue groups have brought a renewed spotlight to Thoroughbreds. We see lots of new people coming into equestrian sport in our region, especially to eventing, and we thought the time was right to bring experts together to talk about this topic. We hope that it will help people who are considering purchasing or adopting a Thoroughbred to make an informed decision by asking necessary questions, avoiding common pitfalls, and learning about issues which are applicable to any racehorse, whether that horse is to become a trail mount or an international jumper. An increased awareness and understanding can help ensure that people find the right match and have a successful new partnership with their horses. "

Panelist Danny Warrington of North East, MD is an international event rider who has had extensive experience with Thoroughbreds not only on the cross-country course, but also in steeplechasing, flat racing, training yearlings, and re-educating horses after retirement from racing. "My first horse to take me to the

3\* level as well as several advanced wins was a Thoroughbred I claimed off the track," noted Warrington. "Another ex-racehorse that we worked with went on to compete at the Olympics with Bobby Costello. We've had great luck with Thoroughbreds, both for ourselves and for our clients."

During the OTTB Mythbusters presentation, Warrington looks forward to sharing his experiences and enthusiasm for Thoroughbreds, while also helping people understand the challenges. "In this country we breed some of the best athletes in the world in our racehorses: they have natural talent, and they will work all day for you," he explained. "But one of the biggest myths I see is that people think it's going to be easy to transition a horse off the track and into a new sport. This is not about instant gratification; it takes time, and the horses need to be in a good program with proper education which will set them up to succeed. Just because they were 'ridden' on the track every day doesn't mean that they were 'ridden' the way we often think. It's important to realize how much work has to go into them, because many of these horses don't have the education people think they have."

Named the 2012 Kentucky Thoroughbred Farm Managers' Club "Farm Manager of the Year", William "Bill" Wofford has spent a lifetime with racehorses. With wife Beth, Wofford owns 120-acre Rimroc Farm in Lexington, KY, where they have been in the business of breaking, consigning, and boarding Thoroughbreds since 1975. Dedicated to helping his equine prodigies successfully transition to new homes once their racing careers are over, Wofford brings his enthusiasm and experienced candor to the OTTB Mythbusters panel. "I think the best thing about Thoroughbreds is that they're incredible athletes - they're like the Michael Jordans of equestrian sport. They can do anything," he said. "Even though there have been changes in horse racing trends, I think Thoroughbreds are as good now as they've ever been. Sometimes it seems you only hear the negative things, but there's plenty of positive to go around. I think there are a lot of good horses out there, but you need to have an organized and informed process to find them. "

The most widespread misconception Wofford hears is that Thoroughbreds are too "hot", but he believes this usually isn't the case. "Too many people think ex-racehorses are too wound up or a little wacky, but some of the worst horses I've ever had were of other breeds," he laughed. "Most Thoroughbreds have great minds, and sometimes being a little animated is a good thing in an athlete."

Dr. Kathleen Anderson of Elkton, MD began her veterinary career under the tutelage of legendary United States Equestrian Team veterinarian Dr. Marty Simensen. Today, she is the owner of Equine Veterinary Care PC, a racing and performance practice based at the renowned Fair Hill Training Center, and has been named as the 2014 vice president of the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP). A lifelong horsewoman and Thoroughbred fan, Dr. Anderson's resume includes roles as an eventing competitor, international competition groom, barn manager, and racetrack exercise rider prior to obtaining her DVM. "After being around Thoroughbreds for well over 30 years, the bottom line for me is that I have found them to have a tremendous amount of heart," noted Dr. Anderson. "Their ability to give their very best effort under pressure is what makes them very special partners."

During the OTTB Mythbusters panel discussion, Dr. Anderson will address health concerns and answer questions about factors which may impact an ex-racehorse's future performance in sport. "From a veterinary perspective, the most important considerations are soundness, especially for the upper levels of competition, as well as temperament," Dr. Anderson said. She also encouraged equestrians who are considering a Thoroughbred as their next mount to avoid necessarily believing common generalizations. "Not 'every' racehorse has a 'hot' temperament; transitioning racehorses entails much more than just pulling the shoes and turning them out; and most of these horses have not been mistreated - they do not need to be 'saved'," she explained. "No matter how much experience someone may have with Thoroughbreds or thinks he/she knows about them, things change over time. Nobody knows everything there is to know about a subject, and we should all remain open to learning new things and new ways of

approaching situations. I hope that people will attend to share their experiences and maybe then try something different."

MSEDA President Mary Fike stressed that the OTTB Mythbusters presentation is not just for the organization's members. "Everyone is welcome!" she noted. "We feel that we've got a good program that will interest lots of people in the horse community, and we hope to reach as many as possible. We're very excited about this program, and we hope that everyone will take a break from the cold weather to join us and share knowledge and enthusiasm about our amazing Thoroughbreds."

The OTTB Mythbusters panel discussion (hosted as part of the MSEDA Annual Meeting) begins at 9:45am and continues until 3:30pm on Saturday, January 18, 2014 and will be held at the Marriott Griffin Gate Resort, 1800 Newtown Pike, Lexington, KY. Fabulous door prizes will be awarded throughout the day! Admission for the presentation is \$45 for MSEDA members and \$55 for nonmembers, and lunch is included. Please register by Wednesday, January 15 by contacting Bev Henson, [bvhenson@gmail.com](mailto:bvhenson@gmail.com). Attendees are also invited to stay and enjoy the festivities of the annual MSEDA Awards Banquet, which kicks off with cocktails at 5pm and includes dinner, awards presentations, and great company. A limited number of tickets for the MSEDA Awards Banquet will be available for sale at the door. For more information and to register to attend the OTTB Mythbusters presentation at the MSEDA Annual Meeting, visit <http://www.mseda.org/>.