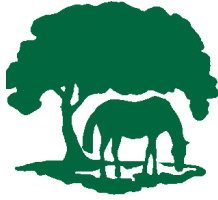


# THOROUGHBRED RETIREMENT FOUNDATION, INC.

November, 1997



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Dear Friend:

*This is about a matter of life and death.*

The Thoroughbred stallion Exceller earned a permanent place in racing history in the 1978 Jockey Club Gold Cup, when he became the only horse ever to defeat two Triple Crown winners in a single race. Exceller rallied from 22 lengths behind to defeat Seattle Slew by a nose; further back in the field that day was Affirmed. With career earnings of more than one-and-a-half million dollars, Exceller was retired in 1979 to Gainesway Farm in Kentucky, where he stood until he was shipped in 1991 to a new owner in Sweden. His first two crops in his new homeland produced 39 starters and 28 winners.

And then, on April 7, the legendary career of the great Exceller came to a screeching end in a Swedish slaughterhouse.

It would be months, however, before a shocked and horrified racing world learned from a story in the July 20 *Daily Racing Form* of his final, frightened hours and heartrending death.

#### ***Hearts aching, many of you wrote to us***

*"Perhaps I am naive, or perhaps I didn't really want to know the fate of retired race horses. ...I never anticipated that a horse of Exceller's caliber could ever meet such a fate. ...Let me know what I can do to assure that another horse won't be 'slaughtered for meat in Sweden' or anywhere else."*

*"I think a living memorial would keep in the forefront of our minds how urgently and continuously these marvelous thoroughbreds, who are so often in grave peril, need our ongoing and diligent help."*

*"I was appalled and sickened [by the] tragic and senseless death of the courageous and gallant race horse Exceller. One can only hope that Exceller's tragic death will prompt racing's fans and all sports fans as well as animal lovers to support the horse retirement programs of your organization...."*

And so we write to you today to ask for your support for the work of the Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation, which *is* a living memorial to Exceller—and to thousands of racehorses like him that have ended their

*Tax exempt foundation • Gifts tax deductible*

Suite 351, 1050 State Highway 35 • Shrewsbury, New Jersey 07702  
Farm (914) 895-8254 • Office (732) 757-0182 • Fax (732) 671-7538  
Midlantic Chapter, "Greener Pastures" • P.O. Box 229 • Middletown, DE 19709



*A favorite with New York racetrackers in his eight years on the track, Creme de la Fete paid a return visit to Saratoga Springs, the scene of former victories, in 1992.*

meaning of the term—stakes winners, champions, high earners. And as was the case with Exceller, their outstanding performances were no guarantee of a natural end to a long and meaningful life. Who can forget the agonizing story of Banker's Jet, a winner of 28 races and \$679,381 in his eight-season career? Said his last trainer, "He'd have run on broken bottles." Jet was discovered by the TRF near death from starvation, alone in a paddock with not so much as a wisp of hay or a drop of water. Nursed back to health by student inmates at our flagship farm in Wallkill, New York, Jet now spends idyllic days gambling in a paddock with his constant companion, the mare Fashion Note, at a TRF satellite farm in Connecticut.

Almost all of TRF's retirees are geldings that ran for our pleasure until their legs could no longer carry them in the claiming and allowance races that fill race cards all over the country. With no value in the breeding shed, where would they be without us? The answer, all too often, is "in a slaughterhouse," like the stallion Exceller. With this difference: for them, there will be no intervening years at a comfortable breeding farm.

To the TRF, *every* racehorse is great; every single one of them has earned the right to humane treatment and lifetime haven.

### **Some TRF Contemporaries of Exceller**

While Exceller was earning accolades in France, England, and at tracks on the East and West Coasts of the United States, some of the TRF equine retirees were also delighting their fans.

Creme de la Fete never won a stakes race; in fact, he ran mostly in claiming races. But he finished first in 40 of his 151 starts—one

racing careers as bloodstained statistics. Only with your help can we continue to grow and expand our lifesaving programs so that these noble animals will face life, not death, when they've run their last race.

### **The TRF—a life sentence**

Exceller's owner sentenced the great horse to death.

At the TRF, we sentence racehorses to life—with the certainty that they will live out their days in safe surroundings, in the care of loving and capable hands.

Like Exceller, some of our retirees were great on the racetrack in the conventional



*The Florida-bred Dark Devil had 116 starts in nine years. He won six of them. "He was like a pet," said his trainer.*

more than the legendary John Henry—and earned \$460,350. He was claimed for the 15th and final time in 1985 by an owner whose intention was to retire him safely with the TRF.

Another 1985 arrival was Delta Leader, who won 21 of 109 starts and earned a very respectable \$325,096 from 1978 to 1984.

Dark Devil came to us in 1986, after nine years of racing. He broke his maiden at Keystone (now Philadelphia Park), and went on to race at smaller tracks like Suffolk Downs, Rockingham Park, and Atlantic City. A front runner who liked the mud, he once won by 27 lengths in the slop at Pocono Downs. Devil retired with lifetime earnings of \$25,650 after 116 starts and six trips to the winner's circle.

Now in their 20s, these are Wallkill's "golden guys." Healthy and spirited, they command the respectful affection of their caregivers.

Take a minute to think about them. *Would they be alive today if the TRF had not been here for them?*

**The TRF saves people's lives, too**

At our permanent facilities located at state correctional facilities in New York, Maryland, and soon Kentucky, the TRF holds out the promise of a lifetime for the horses' caregivers as well—a lifetime incalculably enriched by the experience of working with these magnificent animals. Prison inmates at Wallkill Correctional Facility and juvenile offenders at the Charles Hickey Jr. School derive emotional as well as educational benefits from the Foundation's pioneering, state-accredited vocational training programs in horse care and management.

Well-trained TRF graduates have gone on to jobs with riding stables, horse farms, and racetracks. Armed with newfound self-confidence and renewed purpose, others have continued their educations, completing high school and going on to community colleges. One former student-inmate credits the discipline and responsibility instilled by working with the horses for his decision to help others to redirect their lives; after intensive training he has become a substance-abuse counselor. Another, now employed with a major riding facility in Maryland, has become an accomplished rider himself, winning numerous ribbons in hunter/jumper competitions. His experience working with TRF's retirees has given him a new goal: to go on to college to prepare for a career working with horses.

This powerful interaction between the horses and their caretakers is one of TRF's greatest strengths.

**Thanks to your steadfast support—**

- We have been able to promise, with confidence, lifetime haven to Thoroughbreds in jeopardy.
- We have seen their caretakers re-enter the community as responsible citizens.
- We have begun the rescue of horses in even greater numbers by extending the scope of our programs to include private adoptions and, through our Equine Outreach Division, to lend financial support to struggling horse rescue operations that share our standards and our goals.



*Delta Leader—where would he be today without the TRF? Without your life-giving support?*

**Your continuing help is urgently needed now**

The establishment of additional, desperately needed major retirement facilities, first in Kentucky and then in Florida, California, and Texas, is high in our plan for growth. These states are centers for racing in this country, with countless horses coming off busy tracks. These horses urgently need the retirement options we can only offer them with your help.

Because many of our retirees are infirm when they come to us, we are also in a unique position to offer veterinarians an opportunity to develop effective treatments for significant, although non-life-threatening, equine injuries. At the same time, we will be developing a work force of TRF students skilled in providing specialized, hands-on therapeutic care for these injured racehorses. We have identified a property ideally situated for such equine studies; what's needed is the funding to purchase the land.

And despite our 15-year successful track record, there are still too many people in the industry who remain unaware of our programs and the help we offer. We must continue to reach out to owners and trainers everywhere so that they will know there is a safe future for their horses when their track days are over.

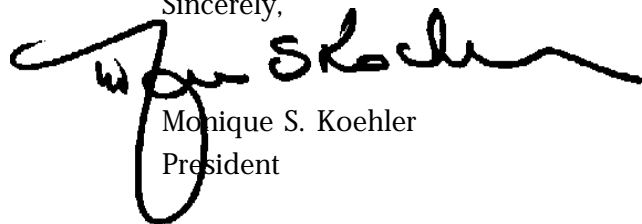
**Your donation right now is the difference between life and death for a horse in peril**

With the TRF, you are assured that your gift will be spent on saving other horses from sharing Exceller's tragic fate. We will not use your donation to pay high-priced fund raisers or to send you frequent appeals. This is the only letter you will receive from us. We know that you want your dollars to be spent on reclaiming the lives of these noble animals and their caregivers, and we pledge to use your gift to maintain and expand our rescue operations.

As we enter this traditional season of holiday giving, we ask you to give the gift of a lifetime to Thoroughbreds in peril and to their caregivers. They're depending on you.

With heartfelt thanks on behalf of the horses and their keepers, and with warm wishes for a happy holiday season,

Sincerely,



Monique S. Koehler  
President

Racing's been good to me. The only thing I can do is give something back. It makes me feel good inside. I love people, I love horses, and I love racing. I think it's the greatest sport in the world.

If we had more racing for the young people, where they could have a horse for a hero, I think it would be much better. You can't believe the letters we got for Alysheba from young children. They sent a quarter, 50 cents, to get him some carrots.

When I was a kid I had all the ponies I wanted but my father never let me have a bicycle. I never understood that; now I do. With a horse you have love and affection.

—Jack Van Berg