

May 13, 2012

**BARRY IRWIN ESTABLISHES THE ISAAC MURPHY SCHOLARSHIP AWARD  
TEAM VALOR OPTS TO RENEW SUPPORT FOR THE RACE FOR EDUCATION  
FORMER CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD IRWIN INSTITUTES A NEW PROGRAM  
RACING PARTNERS TO DONATE 1 PERCENT OF EARNINGS, TVI TO MATCH**



Barry Irwin was there at the start of The Race to Education, which is now celebrating its tenth year of providing college scholarships for the offspring of backstretch and farm workers. Irwin helped to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for The Race for Education, was honored with the Valedictorian Award and was elected to a position as chairman of the board of directors of the Lexington-based non-profit.

For several years Team Valor's racing partners donated 1 percent of purse earnings, which was matched by Barry Irwin himself. But a few years ago, Irwin resigned, because he felt the majority of the funds were being used for students other than the type he thought would be helped the most.

"I left The Race for Education because I envisioned minority offspring of grooms and exercise riders being given a boost. And I didn't see this happening.

"Instead, it seemed to me that the organization was top heavy with white kids from middle and upper middle class families that wanted to go to vet school. Too much emphasis was placed on high grade point average. I didn't think the money was going to the kind of kids that I wanted to see helped."

Last year, when Animal Kingdom won the Kentucky Derby, Team Valor promised a percentage of the colt's earnings in the Triple Crown. A sizable chunk of capital was sent to The Race for Education. Rather than put it into the general fund, however, RFE executive director Elisabeth Jensen set it aside. A couple of months ago she contacted Barry Irwin with an idea that she thought would appeal to him.



"I proposed the Isaac Murphy Scholarship, which was designed specifically with an African American student in mind," Miss Jensen said. "I waited until I found a student that I knew Barry would find ideal. I presented the proposal to him, sent him the biographical information, complete with comments from teachers and an employer at a vet clinic, and Barry loved the idea. We announced it in the industry trade media the week of the Kentucky Derby this year."

Irwin and Jensen met yesterday to finalize plans not only for the Isaac Murphy Scholarship, but to discuss an impending John R. Velazquez Scholarship, which will be earmarked for a student of Latin descent.

*Animal Kingdom provided a substantial infusion of cash into The Race for Education coffers scholarship fund with his Derby win.*

“With funds from Team Valor and The Irwins,” Barry Irwin said “being specifically earmarked for the kind of kids we want to help, we feel it is once again time to rejoin the efforts of The Race for Education.

“In addition to these individual scholarships, which will be available to students for their entire college career, The Race for Education is doing some very important ground work with the offspring of farm and backstretch workers, both in New York at Belmont Park and in Central Kentucky.



“Elisabeth found out that many minority students historically are unable to take advantage of scholarship funding because they are unprepared for college. So first in New York, working with the Anna House, and now in two schools in the bluegrass, a program has been instituted that spends up to 3 years preparing high school students for their college years.

“There is a mentoring program, volunteer and paid teachers, and after-school supervision that gives these students the kind of grounding they need, so that when they graduate high school, they can move on to the next level.

*The Race for Education's executive director Miss Elisabeth Jensen.*

“This is something that makes so much sense and will make a huge impact on the community. I am really behind this idea.”

Team Valor International's racehorses earn between \$2 and \$4 million annually. It seems likely that a \$3-million average is a realistic projection, so that would provide about \$30,000 for The Race for Education. Barry and Kathleen's Team Valor International parent company will match that figure, so that money to be donated to the RFE would be from a low of \$40,000 to a high of \$80,000 per year.

Irwin said “I can see as many as half a dozen kids being sent to college as winners of the Isaac Murphy and John R. Velazquez Scholarships, with many, many more youngsters being prepared to accept college scholarship as a result of improving their learning skills at The Race for Education's high school program.

“One percent is not a lot of money and I know that our partners feel good about giving back to the sport in this manner. I am all for horses being treated well upon their retirement, but I have more of an interest in treating well the families of those people that devote their lives to our horses.”



*The Race for Education's office building is located on Versailles Road just down the pike from famed Keeneland race course.*

Funding of The Race for Education scholarships and program commenced on May 1, 2012 for the Team Valor International runners.

News release from Kentucky Derby week from The Race for Education as follows:

## **RACE FOR EDUCATION AWARDS ISAAC MURPHY SCHOLARSHIP**

Lexington, Ky. –May1, 2012—The Race for Education is pleased to announce Ms. Brittani Koons of Gahanna, Ohio, as the first recipient of the Isaac Murphy Scholarship.

This college scholarship is sponsored jointly by Team Valor International racing partnerships and the stable's owners Barry and Kathleen Irwin and is awarded to an African American student that has a passion to work in the equine industry upon graduation. Criteria for this scholarship include financial need, communication skills, leadership, and commitment to the agriculture industry.



"African Americans had an important and positive impact on horse racing in an earlier era of racing in the United States," Irwin said. "I want to do something to honor that heritage and encourage today's black youth to consider a career in our great sport."

Brittani Koons, a freshman at Otterbein University in Westerville, Ohio, will receive up to \$18,000. She is majoring in equine pre-veterinary studies and pursuing a minor in Equine Business Management. She has an interest in attending veterinary school upon graduation with future goals of becoming a racetrack practitioner and a secondary career as a Thoroughbred farm owner with a breeding operation. Koons is currently working at a small animal hospital as well as volunteering with a nearby boarding facility to gain the hands-on horse experience needed for veterinary school.

This scholarship, endowed by Team Valor and The Irwins, long time supporters of The Race For Education, will be awarded to one student annually. The amount will be based on the recipient's financial need.

*Inaugural Isaac Murphy Scholarship recipient Miss Brittani Koons of Gahanna, Ohio.*

The award memorializes Isaac Burns Murphy (April 16, 1861 - February 12, 1896), an African-American Hall of Fame jockey, who is considered one of the greatest riders in American Thoroughbred horse racing history. Murphy won three Kentucky Derbys. Murphy rode in a total of eleven Kentucky Derbies, winning three times: on Buchanan in 1884, Riley in 1890, and Kingman in 1891. Kingman was owned and trained by Dudley Allen, and is the only horse owned by an African-American to win the Derby. Murphy is the only jockey to have won the Kentucky Derby, the Kentucky Oaks, and the Clark Handicap in the same year (1884). At its creation in 1955, Isaac Burns Murphy was the first jockey to be inducted into the National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame.

Information re Isaac Murphy is available at the National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame Retrieved 2012-04-18, <http://www.racingmuseum.org/hall-of-fame/horse-jockeys-view.asp?varID=47>

The Race for Education provides educational programs and college scholarships to young people in the equine and agriculture industries with significant financial need. The majority of their students come from high need, low income backgrounds. The Race for Education not only offers financial support for these students, but also mentoring, tutoring, and partnership support to ensure students are receiving the support and educational skills they need to be successful. The Starting Gate, a youth outreach program was also established by The Race for Education in 2009 in New York and has expanded to include two Central Kentucky locations in 2011.