

## The New York Racing Association to Honor Legendary Race Caller Tom Durkin with Special Two-Day Celebration at Saratoga Race Course

### ***Sunday of closing weekend to also feature final giveaway of the 2014 meet***

SARATOGA SPRINGS, N.Y. - The New York Racing Association, Inc. will celebrate the illustrious career of longtime track announcer Tom Durkin with two days in his honor at Saratoga Race Course on Sunday, August 31 and Monday, September 1.

The celebration will begin on Sunday with a special winner's circle ceremony honoring the accomplishments of Durkin's legendary career following his final race call at Saratoga in the Grade 1 Spinaway. The call will bring Durkin's 43-year career to a close. Fans are encouraged to remain in their seats after the Spinaway to witness the ceremony.

"Tom Durkin is one of the greatest race callers in history and we are fortunate to have had him with us here in New York for so many years. It is truly fitting to see Tom take his final bow in Saratoga, a place that he loves and where he is truly beloved," said the New York Racing Association CEO and President Chris Kay. "We encourage racing fans to join us as we celebrate Tom's storied career and wish him the best with a send-off fitting of the affection and admiration felt by fans for this unique, poetic and unparalleled storyteller."

Saratoga Springs Mayor Joanne Yepsen will issue a citywide proclamation that will declare Sunday to be "Tom Durkin Day" throughout the city of Saratoga Springs. The proclamation, in part, reads: "For Saratoga race fans, his (Tom's) voice has been a familiar and reassuring presence, one of the sounds of a Saratoga summer. His warmth and generosity have won him great admiration in our city, and many Saratogians are proud to consider him a friend."

"I want to thank the tens of thousands of dedicated people, from the grooms to the jockeys to the trainers and owners, that help put on this exciting show, remembering, as ever, it is all about these magnificent animals," said Durkin. "I was fortunate enough to have described the finished product. Most of all, I must thank the people that make everything possible - the racing fan. Thank you again from one lucky announcer."

The celebration will continue on Closing Day, Monday, September 1, when Durkin returns to Saratoga to greet fans, sign autographs and take pictures in the backyard beginning at noon.

Classic race calls made by Durkin during his long career will be showcased on the video boards between races on both Sunday and Monday.

Born in Chicago, Durkin began calling races at county fairs in Wisconsin in the summer of 1971. In 1975, he moved on to ply his trade at a string of small tracks including Cahokia Downs, Balmoral Race Course, Quad City Downs and Miles Park before landing the job at famed Hialeah Race Course in 1981.

Three years later, he was hired as the announcer for the annual Breeders' Cup, a job he held until 2005, and gained further fame calling the Triple Crown for a decade beginning in 2001. Durkin began his tenure with the New York Racing Association in 1990. Some of Durkin's most memorable calls have come on the New York Racing Association circuit of Aqueduct Racetrack, Belmont Park and Saratoga Race Course.

*Additional Closing Weekend highlights: Saratoga T-shirt giveaway and The Hopeful*

Sunday will also feature the final giveaway of the season - a Saratoga short-sleeve t-shirt, free with paid admission, while supplies last. Guests will be able to redeem up to three vouchers at Saratoga Race Course's giveaway redemption areas, including the one they receive with paid admission and the two additional vouchers they are able to purchase at the multiple admissions line beneath the grandstand.

On Closing Day, Monday, September 1, the final Grade 1 of the meet - the 110<sup>th</sup> running of The Hopeful - will offer guests a look at some of the possible stars of next year's Triple Crown campaign and Travers.

For more information about events Saratoga Race Course, visit [www.nyra.com/saratogaevents](http://www.nyra.com/saratogaevents).