

# THE AFRICAN CONNECTIONS RESEARCH AND EDUCATION FUND, INC.



Harambee Farm

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**For Immediate Release!**

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Abdelkebir Ouaddar (Morocco) aboard Quickly de Kreisker at the 2016 Summer Olympics  
Photo Credit: Tasnim News Agency

**October 19<sup>th</sup> Tom Bass Seminar - Economics of the \$50 billion U.S. Horse industry offer opportunities to minority youth and entrepreneurs. But, there are significant hurdles to overcome...**

**The 2019 Tom Bass Seminar** will examine issues related to diversity in the equestrian industry, as part of the [2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Day of the African Equestrian](#) (#DOTAE2019). Scheduled for **Saturday, October 19<sup>th</sup>** (10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.) at the Tryon International Equestrian Center (TIEC) in Mill Spring, North Carolina (USA), the seminar is presented FREE to the public by The AFRICAN CONNECTIONS Research and Education Fund, Inc. in association with SportsQuest International, LLC.

A world-class destination for everything equine, TIEC played host to the **FEI World Equestrian Games** (the official world championships of equestrian sport) in September 2018.

A legendary [American Saddlebred](#) trainer, Tom Bass (1859 - 1934) was born enslaved in Columbia, Missouri. He played a prominent role both in the establishment of the [American Royal Horse Show](#) in Kansas City and in the promotion of the city of Mexico, Missouri as the '*Saddle Horse Capital of the World*'. Highlights of his extraordinary career include championships at two World's Fairs and more than 2,000 blue ribbons. For many years he was the only African-American permitted to compete at the American Royal. The Tom Bass bit, developed to give the rider control without causing pain to the horse, is still in use today. During his lifetime, Bass performed before such luminaries as [Queen Marie of Romania](#), [William Jennings Bryan](#), [P.T. Barnum](#) and U.S. Presidents [Grover Cleveland](#), [William McKinley](#), [Theodore Roosevelt](#), [William Howard Taft](#) and [Calvin Coolidge](#). His more prominent clients included Mr. Roosevelt, [Buffalo Bill Cody](#), Anheuser-Busch executives [Adolphus](#) and [August Busch](#) and [Will Rogers](#).

Panelists confirmed for the 2019 Tom Bass Seminar include: **Julian Hyde**, representing the Equestrian Federation of Jamaica; **Stanford Moore**, Publisher of Black Reins Magazine; **Julian Seaman**, Media Director of the Badminton Horse Trials (United Kingdom); **Hillary Tucker**, Equine Services Specialist & Territory Sales Manager at McCauley Brothers - an Alltech company and **Leslie Wylie**, a journalist with Nation Media, LLC. Additional panelists will be announced in the run-up to the event.

Topics to be explored by panelists include:

- Demystifying horse sport - *not for rich kids only!*
- Developing broad-based community support for equestrian activities at all levels
- Leveraging (new and traditional) media in horse focused education and promotion
- Making horses '*legit*' again in lower and middle income communities
- Identifying and promoting heirs to the legendary equines of yesteryear: (Roy Roger's) '**Trigger**', (The Lone Ranger's) '**Silver**', (Zorro's) '**Tornado**', (My Friend) '**Flicka**', '**The Black Stallion**', '**Mister Ed**', (Gene Autry's) '**Champion the Wonder Horse**', etc.
- Incorporating the rich equestrian heritages of non-white, non-European communities (including African, African-American, Asian, Hispanic, Native-American, Romani, South Asian and others) into our shared equestrian narrative

Organizers of the Tom Bass Seminar point out that horses are **big business**.

According to the American Horse Council, the horse industry contributes approximately \$50 billion in direct economic impact to the U.S. economy, supporting almost one million jobs on a full-time basis<sup>1</sup>. According to statistics presented at the 2013 FEI Sports Forum — held at the International Institute for Management Development (IMD) in Lausanne, Switzerland — the horse industry has a €100 billion (\$128.151 billion) annual economic impact within the European Union. The economic impact in the United Kingdom is estimated at being over £7 billion (\$10.643 billion)<sup>2</sup>.

A major challenge for an Olympic sport that promotes itself as being truly global, “clean” and fully inclusive, is a conspicuous lack of people of color. People of color are underrepresented in the ranks of riders, owners, trainers, breeders, veterinarians, farriers, nutritionists, sponsors,

spectators and members of the equestrian media. Conversely, there is an overrepresentation as grooms, nannies, hot walkers and stall muckers.

To remedy this situation, equestrian sports promoters and organizations representing all facets of the industry are being urged to understand that it is good business to spend advertising dollars in minority communities. “Developing a more diverse fan base involves supporting equestrian sport training programs in those communities and working in concert with ethnic media outlets in educating members of the public about horse sport. Cultivating cooperative alliances with minority owned businesses will yield tangible benefits”, wrote #DOTAE2019 Co-Chair **Melvin Cox** in a [2017 editorial](#) published by HorseNation.com.

Mr. Cox, a Lecturer at the [University of California, Santa Cruz](#) is the Founder and Managing Director of SportsQuest Interational, LLC - a media production and consulting business focused on the equestrian industry. Mr. Cox foresees an explosion of interest in equestrian sports throughout the United States — reaching across all socioeconomic strata. But, he warns, “the outreach to new market segments will have to be done correctly — from a position of true humility and respect, and not from one of blatant arrogance”.

“Much as motorsport has successfully built a loyal following among fans with little if any opportunity (or desire) to own a Formula One racing car”, wrote Cox, “the horse sports can be proactively marketed to all demographics. Just as Major League Baseball attracts millions who will never hit a curveball, the equestrian disciplines can find deeply loyal and very knowledgeable aficionados among persons representing all manner of humanity.”

The solution proposed by Melvin Cox and others targets a more equitable distribution of the scholarships, internships, jobs, contracts, investment opportunities and profits associated with the global horse business. A key component of this effort is to increase awareness among young people in cities, suburbs and rural communities regarding the opportunities for successful

and fulfilling careers available in the horse business. Cox believes that America's Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and her Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) represent an untapped "gold mine" of talent and opportunity.

"There are more ways to make money in this industry than meet the eye", says #DOTAE2019 Co-Chair **Pamela Glover-Cox**. "The horse world has an ongoing need for skills in many areas including: Advertising and Media, Apparel, Art, Bloodstock Management, Construction and Engineering, Course Design, Ergonomics. Hospitality, Logistics, Medicine, Safety, Security Systems, Software Design, Stable Management, Transportation and Veterinary Services."

This month's Day of the African Equestrian will be staged as an adjunct to the International Jumping Competition being held October 16 – 20 at the Tryon International Equestrian Center. The tournament will include qualifying classes for the **2020 Olympic Games** in Tokyo, Japan.

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The #DOTAE2019 gala staged on Saturday evening, October 19<sup>th</sup> (7:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.) at Harambee Farm will honor equestrians of African ancestry active in national and international level pursuits since 1975.

Guests at the evening soirée will feast upon a variety of treats inspired by the cuisines of North Africa and the Americas – expertly prepared by chefs from the renowned Hare and Hound Pub of Landrum, SC.

#DOTAE2019 will benefit educational programs administered by The AFRICAN CONNECTIONS Research and Education Fund, Inc.

Tickets for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Day of the African Equestrian gala are available on-line at:  
<https://dotae2019.brownpapertickets.com/>

**The AFRICAN CONNECTIONS Research and Education Fund, Inc.**

([www.africanconnections.com](http://www.africanconnections.com)) was created in direct response to the numerous distortions, half-truths and omissions seen almost daily in the popular media regarding Africa, her people and the African Diaspora.

The principal mission of the organization is to illuminate, to educate and to provide a balanced viewpoint that celebrates genuine achievement and service to humanity.

**SportsQuest International, LLC** ([www.SportsQuestInternational.com](http://www.SportsQuestInternational.com)) is a privately held multimedia production and consulting company specializing in the development and promotion of sports related programming that presents positive, informationally rich themes. The company is widely known for its coverage of national and international level equestrian events.

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<sup>1</sup> 2017 National Economic Impact Study – American Horse Council

<sup>2</sup> Graeme Cooke. "Trends in Growth of Equestrian Sport." FEI Sports Forum, 8 April, 2013. Web. 27 Jan. 2017.

Last Updated: October 8, 2019