



Randy Rouse (L) and Ernie Oare (R) in Middleburg in the 1970s



## Randolf Dashiell Rouse

by  
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**I**f you go to a point-to-point or steeplechase race anywhere in Virginia, you will more than likely run across an older gentleman in corduroy pants, a sporty jacket, a ready smile, a twinkle in his eye, and his tell-tale fedora-style hat perched at a jaunty angle. He will be in the paddock saddling his horses or giving

instructions to the jocks. Often, he is seen in the winner's circle. The gentleman of focus is 89-year-old Randy Rouse of Arlington, Virginia.

Randy was born in 1916 in Smithfield, Virginia, to a family of farmers. His mother's family were very successful multifaceted farmers with large

holdings in the area. Randy grew up in Newport News but spent his childhood weekends, holidays, and summers at the Smithfield farm. His time was spent milking cows, shooting rabbits—but mainly riding horses. He rode and showed his grandfather's horses. He grew to love horses and all of the facets of their personality that make them such great creatures.

Randy completed his education at Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia. After college he came home to Newport News and worked in the shipbuilding business until World War II started and the Navy beckoned. His port of call was the Office of the Secretary of the Navy in Washington, DC. After the war he stayed in the area. He was fortunate to drift into the building business. He bought some lots from an old farmer at Tysons Corner for \$700 per lot and built starter homes for the returning GIs. His company soon expanded into land development, motor hotels, and office buildings. He says he was lucky that he got into the right thing at the right time, but he obviously had vision. Randy is still actively involved in the business and is very proud of his immense success.

While in Washington, he got back into horses by exercising and showing field hunters for some local people from the Fairfax Hunt. He joined the Fairfax Hunt and developed a deep love of foxhunting. Foxhunting has been ever present in Randy's life since the late 1940s, and he has been Master of Fairfax Hunt since 1960. Recently, he has turned over taking the field to a younger person, but he is still in evidence in the field during the hunting season. Fairfax Hunt is also fortunate that Randy has made all of his substantial land holdings available to them to hunt.

Even though foxhunting and duck hunting were his main sports, in his late 30s Randy took up steeplechase racing. He rode his first race at the Rappahannock Point-to-Point. His skills were sorely lacking at the time, and he fell

and was injured. The ambulance was already taken by another faller in the race, Joe Rogers. Since Joe was not hurt as badly, he got out of the ambulance and let Randy get in, and off he went to the hospital. The two gentlemen have been friendly rivals in the racing world ever since. Randy went on to become a well-recognized and accomplished jockey in the point-to-point circuit from 1956-1983. Typical of Randy, after one well-run race

that he handily won in 1983, he jumped off the horse and declared his retirement. He thought that at age 67 he'd tempted fate long enough.

The entire time he was racing, he was also training timber horses. His first purchase was Ricacho, who was favored to win the Gold Cup. The first time Ricacho raced in the Gold Cup with Paddy Smithwick aboard, Ricacho was ahead by a huge margin and was going at a blister-



**Ricacho winning the Virginia Gold Cup in Warrenton in 1960. Fron left to right: Mrs. Pauline Rouse, Randy's mother; Randy; Joe Aitcheson, jockey; and Mrs. Billy Wilbur, presenter**

**Cinzano with Randy Rouse winning his third consecutive Casanova Cup in Warrenton, Virginia**





**Jockey Tom Foley with Fields of Omagh, winning the International Gold Cup in Warrenton, Virginia in 2005**

**Randy Rouse ( second on left) and Tom Foley**

ing pace when he fell. Randy was a bit discouraged, but with his usual good humor and determination he went on training Ricacho, and that horse went on to win the Gold Cup in 1960. By this time Randy was thoroughly smitten with the sport.

Randy says his best horse was Cinzano, who came to him through a set of well-publicized and unusual circumstances. Cinzano, a three-year-old champion out of Uruguay, was bought by an American who also bought another very similar looking three-year-old from Uruguay. They arrived in the US, and the next day Cinzano was pronounced dead and insurance amounting to \$150,000 was collected. It was shortly discovered that a “fast one” had been pulled and that Cinzano was still alive. A great furor ensued with the end result being that Cinzano was banned by the National Steeplechase Association from ever running “under rules.” He was sold to Randy for a very small sum and was allowed to run in the point-to-points. Randy ran him in 14 races and won all 14 with Randy in

the irons at the tender age of 65. He finally retired Cinzano to foxhunting because “it was embarrassing that he would always win.”

Randy says his most memorable race was when his horse Curley Joe won the International Gold Cup in Rolling Rock, New York in 1958; his most surprising win was in October 2005 when he again won the Gold Cup in Warrenton, Virginia, with his new horse, Fields of Omagh. His wife Michelle had bought the race horse from Kinross Farm as a field hunter. The horse had a problem with quitting, so Randy decided to run him over timber—but he continued the quitting. With his usual patience and intuition with horses, Randy turned him out, let him rest and, after several months, brought him back into work. The horse so impressed Randy that he put him in the Gold Cup and won handily. Needless to say Randy will run him again in the Gold Cup this year.

Randy says the thing he enjoys most about horses is the relationships he builds with them. He says that when one

rides a horse, one should consider and treat it as a friend. The horse will respond accordingly and perform willingly. Randy feels his greatest attribute with a horse is being kind to them. He says that sometimes you have to be tough, but if you are kind also, it will give the horses confidence in their ability and let them know that you are their friend. A person has to understand horses to accomplish this, and Randy feels that he does a pretty good job of that.

Randy’s accolades on the race circuit as a jockey include winning the Seven Corners Challenge Championship 11 times; winning the Casanova Cup 13 times; and winning Potomac Hunt Races eight times. Today Randy still trains both flat and timber horses and usually has about eight horses in work at his farm in Loudoun County. His love of horses and his zest for the life they offer him are still in evidence as he goes to the barn to train. Do not be surprised to see Randy training in the morning and unloading hay with his staff in the afternoon—this at 89 years of age.

Over the years, Randy has served on many equestrian boards including the National Steeplechase Board, Virginia Steeplechase Association, and the Steeplechase Board of Stewards. He was instrumental in bringing the Pari-mutuel Betting Bill to the state by being on the first Pari-mutuel Commission appointed by Governor Linwood Holton. One of his most significant contributions to racing was the introduction of the National Fences from Ireland over which nearly all hurdle races are run today. He had been introduced to the jumps in Ireland while foxhunting and was so enamored that he brought one home, copied it and announced that the Fairfax Point-to-Point was running over the jumps. The jockeys were in revolt at first, but Randy, ever the diplomat, suggested that they run one race over the fences and if they didn’t like them or if there was an accident then the fences



Michelle and Randy Rouse

would be removed. The race was run without incident, the jockeys loved the fences, and the rest is history.

Randy met his first wife, movie star Audrey Meadows, in the 1940s while at a waterskiing club near Annapolis. The marriage was short-lived, and Randy was single for the next 25 years. After 25 years Randy says "I was becoming more particular and less desirable, so I decided I better changed and find a good woman." Shortly afterwards he met and married Michelle, his wife of 25 years. He and Michelle share a deep love of hunting, horses, and racing and have forged a very viable partnership. Certainly Michelle professes a deep admiration for her husband, his character, and his accomplishments. According to Michelle, "Randy has a voracious zest for life; he takes big chunks out of life and faces each day with exuberance."

The history of Randolph Dashiell Rouse is one of a man of multiple accomplishments and many contributions to the horse world and the business world. Randy has deep concern for his friends and family. They all are extremely important to him and he admits that he is proud of the fact that he has a lot of friends. Randy feels that life is wonderful and that it is perfect to wake up in the morning knowing he has a job to do. He is hopeful that he can "keep doing what I like." He states that he would "rather wear out than rust out," and I am sure that will be the case.

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