



## KENNETH McPEEK

**Born:** August 2, 1962 in Fort Chaffee, Ark.

**Residence:** Lexington, Ky.

**Family:** Wife Sue and daughter Jennifer Lynne.

**Triple Crown victories:** Belmont Stakes – Sarava (2002).

Ken McPeek knew his destiny early – being involved in horse racing. When questioned by a college buddy about what he was going to do on graduation from the University of Kentucky there was no hesitation in his response of living a life with Thoroughbred horses.



He did follow his business degree as far as New York for an interview with a brokerage firm, but he turned to the racetrack where he took a job walking hots for eventual Hall of Fame trainer Shug McGaughey.

McPeek took out his trainer's license in 1985 with his father as his first client, owner Ron McPeek. Before long, the young trainer hooked up with Lexington horse owner Roy Monroe, whose son had played high school football with McPeek. His first big horse for Monroe was Tejano Run, who was bought for \$20,000 and finished third in the 1994 Breeders' Cup Juvenile. The next year the horse gave the pair goose bumps as he rolled down the Churchill Downs stretch to finish second to Thunder Gulch in the Kentucky Derby.

Tejano Run eventually banked \$1.1 million in his career on the racetrack.

Both Repent and Take Charge Lady were solid purchases and runners for McPeek, also. Repent was second in the 2001 Breeders' Cup Juvenile and Take Charge Lady was a multiple stakes winner and ran in three Breeders' Cup races on championship day – 2001 Juvenile Fillies and '02 and '03 Distaff. She's A Devil Due won four straight races before finishing third in the 2000 Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies.

McPeek trainee Harlan's Holiday was the morning-line favorite in the 2002 Kentucky Derby but finished seventh before running fourth in the Preakness Stakes. Just prior to the running of the Belmont Stakes, Harlan's Holiday was taken away from McPeek and sent to Todd Pletcher. But McPeek had the last laugh as Sarava, his 70-1 shot, nailed Medaglia d'Oro for the win.

McPeck began a year-long self-imposed sabbatical from the sport in June 2005 and turned over his 160-horse stable to assistants, mainly Helen Pitts, and devoted his time to bloodstock work. Buying for Midnight Cry Stable, McPeck signed the ticket for Curlin as a yearling for \$57,000. The rest is history as the strapping colt went on to win the 2007 Preakness and Breeders' Cup Classic to become Horse of the Year as well as winning the Eclipse Award as the nation's top 3-year-old. Curlin won the 2008 Dubai World Cup to become the sports first \$10-million earner. He also won Horse of the Year honors again as well as the Eclipse for older male.

McPeck and his wife, Sue, bought the old Pillar Stud property in Lexington and renamed the 115-acre parcel Magdalena. Kentucky Derby winner Tomy Lee is buried there, and the farm also is the site of a pre-Civil War family cemetery. McPeck trains his horses on the farm.

In 2009, McPeck finished 19th among the nation's purse earners with \$4.9 million.