

Glorious Gem Twist Euthanized

By Cindy Hale

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It is the horse that binds all equestrians, and it is with sadness that the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) announced the passing of one of the country's most admired competition horses that not only inspired countless fans of show jumping, but left a legacy for generations to come. Gem Twist, highly-regarded as one of the world's best show jumpers, was euthanized on Saturday, Nov. 18, due to "infirmities of old age." Gem Twist, who was bred by Frank Chapot, was 27 years old.

In 1987, Gem Twist was ridden by veteran show jumper Greg Best to a Silver-medal team victory at the Pan American Games in Indianapolis, In. That year, the pair also took the title of American Grandprix Association's champion. In his long career, Gem Twist carried three riders in total to the title--Best in 1987, Leslie Burr Howard in 1993, and Laura Chapot in 1995.

The year following his first Pan American medal, Gem Twist shone at the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games, where Best again rode the gelding. The pairing would bring home two Olympic medals for their efforts--Individual and Team Silver medals. At the inaugural World Equestrian Games held in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1990, Gem Twist was honored with the "Best Horse in the World" award, jumping clear rounds with all four of his riders.

"He was like a pal that took me everywhere first class," Frank Chapot says. "You don't get many pals like that. He never let me down."

The decision was made to euthanize the American Thoroughbred after he had sustained a pulled muscle, rendering him unable to stand. Gem Twist was cremated, and the Chapot family and longtime owner Michael Golden shared his ashes.