

Obituary from the *Chicago Tribune*

Stan Bergstein, executive vice president of Harness Tracks of America from 1961 to 2011, excelled at multi-tasking long before the phrase entered the American workplace vocabulary. “The things Stan was good at he was great at,” said Phil Langley, president of the United States Trotting Association and director of racing at Balmoral Park and Maywood Park. “His contributions to harness racing will never be duplicated.” A resident of Hinsdale (from 1963 to 1978), Mr. Bergstein was an administrator, writer, editor, publicist, race announcer, TV commentator, auctioneer, pedigree expert, event planner, innovator and ambassador for the sport he dedicated his life to. The only person to be inducted into both the Harness Racing Hall of Fame and its Communicators Hall of Fame, Mr. Bergstein, 87, died Wednesday, Nov. 2, at his home in Tucson, Ariz. He had suffered serious cardio-pulmonary problems in the past year. “Harness racing lost its most respected voice,” said Bill Finley, editor and publisher of the newsletter *Harness Racing Update*. “Never has one man ever contributed such an amazing array of talents to the benefit of harness racing. Never has one man earned so much respect and admiration in harness racing. Never has one man labored so long and hard for the betterment of harness racing.” Mr. Bergstein retired as HTA executive vice president in February. Shortly thereafter the United States Harness Writers Association announced that it would honor him for lifetime achievement at its 2012 awards dinner in Orlando, Fla. on Feb. 12. A staunch advocate of forging closer ties between Standardbred and Thoroughbred racing, most notably in regards to medication abuse and drug testing, Mr. Bergstein began writing a column for the thoroughbred publication *Daily Racing Form* in 1948 and continued to contribute columns through mid-September. “He could have done anything,” said Tom Aldrich, president and chief operating officer of Northfield Park near Cleveland and one of Mr. Bergstein’s many protégées. “I can’t imagine what harness racing in this continent would have been like without him.” Mr. Bergstein was born in Pottsville, Pa. He served in the army during World War II, walking onto Omaha Beach a few days after the Normandy invasion and engaging in combat. After his discharge, he enrolled in Northwestern’s Medill School of Journalism. After graduating, he became track announcer at Maywood, which inaugurated pari-mutuel harness racing in Illinois in 1946. In 1948, he was hired by Abe Saperstein to work as an announcer and publicist for the Harlem Globetrotters, traveling throughout America and abroad with the team for five years. Subsequently, he worked as race secretary and track announcer at now-defunct Sportsman’s Park, which had added the Standardbreds to its racing program in 1949 and was the Midwest leader in the sport. Mr. Bergstein left Sportsman’s in 1961 to become executive vice president of Harness Tracks of America, a federation of the country’s harness tracks. He opened an office on North Michigan Avenue. Seven years later he added the title of vice president of publicity and public relations for the U.S. Trotting Association, the governing body of the Standardbred sport. He also became editor of the USTA’s award-winning monthly magazine, *Hoof Beats*. During this period Mr. Bergstein was the announcer for harness racing’s two premier events, working two years at the Little Brown Jug and starting a 17-year stint at the Hambletonian. He also inaugurated the World Driving Championship, a yearly series of races involving harness drivers from the U.S. and Europe with competition on both continents. In the mid-1970s, Mr. Bergstein stopped working full time for the USTA and started commuting from Chicago to New York to do a weekly harness racing show on WOR-TV. The show continued for 12 1/2 years. He relocated HTA’s headquarters to New Jersey, then again to Tucson when he moved there in 1994. He became a mentor to many of the students in the University of Arizona’s racing industry studies program, including HTA general counsel Paul Estok, who succeeds him as executive vice president. His wife died 17 months ago, shortly after the couple’s 60th wedding anniversary. Mr. Bergstein is survived by a son, Al, a daughter, Lisa Bergstein Tremback, and four grandsons.