

RTCA ELECTS NEW PRESIDENT

Edward Smith was elected as the Race Track Chaplaincy of America's new President on Monday at the organization's five-day Annual Convention and Chaplains' School, held this year in Anaheim, California.

Smith is a Dallas-based travel executive who grew up in Hawaii and has business interests across the globe. He has been a lay missionary for several international ministries, served as an RTCA Regional Director and sits on the Chaplaincy Council at Lone Star Park at Grand Prairie near Dallas.

"I want to be hands-on in my approach and continue to help the RTCA form strategic partnerships," he said. "I think it's important to walk hand-in-hand with racing industry leaders and continue the (RTCA's) momentum."

Smith said he believes his background as a business owner in the high-tech travel industry will help RTCA's efforts to open outreach ministries to track workers everywhere. He terms the racing industry, "a global backstretch village."

The RTCA recently opened outreach ministries to track workers at two Canadian tracks and has others planned in Jamaica and Puerto Rico.

Smith succeeds Don K. Dean, a Maryland-based owner-breeder who served as the RTCA's chief executive for three years. Re-elected vice president was W. Elliott Walden, private trainer for WinStar Farm. Sam Ed Spence, chaplain at Lone Star Park at Grand Prairie in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, was re-elected as secretary and Arlington Park Chaplain Luis Peralta was re-elected Chaplains' Representative. Margaret E. Landreth, a racehorse owner and president of the Chaplaincy Council at Sam Houston Race Park in Texas, was elected treasurer, succeeding Phyllis Bunch.

Both Dean and Bunch will continue to serve on the RTCA's Board of Directors. Dean will serve as the representative of the Chaplaincy Council Presidents, and Bunch, a horse owner from Guthrie, Okla., will represent the Regional Directors.

Dan Fick, Executive Vice President and Executive Director of The Jockey Club, was elected Director-Emeritus and will serve on the Board of Directors. Fick was instrumental in the revitalization of the RTCA over the past several years.

Smith, president of Caribbean travel specialist Col.com, comes into the RTCA presidency with little horse experience but extensive experience in missionary work. The son of a minister, he was involved in missionary work as a youth while growing up in Hawaii and has continued his missionary work in central Mexico. He said it is not unusual for him to be sleeping on a dirt floor while doing missionary work on one weekend and residing in a luxury suite at a Caribbean hotel the next. He also writes a monthly column on Caribbean travel that is available on the company's website.

Smith was drawn into the work of the Race Track Chaplaincy of America by Corey Johnsen, the Magna Entertainment Corp. Group Vice President, who previously was general manager at Lone Star Park at Grand Prairie. After Smith's wife, Adella, went to work at Lone Star, the new RTCA president became heavily involved in the local Chaplaincy Council.

The 2005 Chaplains' School featured training on crisis intervention. Teachers included Dr. Barbara Ann Wilmes, Executive Director of the Backstretch Employee

Assistance Team (BEAT) and director of EAP services for the New York Racing Association, Peggy Goetsch, Executive Director of the Racing Industry Charitable Foundation in Chicago and Dr. Eva Tricules Klostreich, who has a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychotherapy and is the daughter of retired RTCA Chaplain Homer Tricules.

Among the featured speakers was Rev. John Boyers, the Executive Director of Score (Serving Sports through Chaplaincy). The Manchester, England based non-profit places chaplains with the nation's sports teams and assists England's lone horse racing chaplain

RTCA Executive Director, Dr. Enrique Torres said he was impressed by the backgrounds of the new board members and added that their help comes during a time of rapid expansion. "We are training our chaplains to fulfill the Lord's Great Commission and proclaim the Good News around the world," he said. "The Chaplains' School itself is designed to enhance the skills of our chaplains and enable them to better serve the racing industry throughout the world."