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“RODNEY JENKINS: THE RED RIDER PROJECT”
Opening June 3 at the National Sporting Library & Museum

MIDDLETOWN, Virginia – May 21, 2024 – Opening June 3 and on view through the end of 2024 at the National Sporting Library & Museum (NSLM), Rodney Jenkins: The Red Rider Project is an interactive, twofold project—an exhibit as well as a call-to-action. To kick off the exhibit, a champagne toast to Rodney Jenkins will be held in the Library on June 4 at 5pm. The exhibit dovetails perfectly with the Upperville Colt & Horse Show which is celebrating 50 years of show jumping and Jenkins winning the first-ever Upperville grand prix on June 9, 1974.

On view throughout the Library’s Main Reading Room, the exhibit draws heavily on a recently donated photographic archive which includes a copy of every published photo of Jenkins as a professional hunter/jumper rider. Given Jenkins often rode more than a dozen horses at any given horse show, the collection includes thousands of images. Many of the photos were reproduced in sporting periodicals that cemented Jenkins’ image as the busiest, most winning rider.

Remaining on top was no mean feat for Jenkins’ multi-decade career. His lengthy run overlapped with the adoption of rigorous Grand Prix standards in America and the transformation of show jumping as a nationally covered spectator sport. Jenkins’ omnipresence meant his achievements were witnessed by thousands of people but, surprisingly, have yet to be chronicled in a monumental biography.

The call-to-action portion of Rodney Jenkins: The Red Rider Project seeks to preserve the existing trove of collective memory from those who knew, competed against, worked alongside, or admired Jenkins. The NSLM will spearhead this effort by conducting and documenting in-depth interviews with those who knew Jenkins. The exclusive findings will be available to NSLM Members and those who wish to become part of The Red Rider Project.
After viewing the exhibit, visitors will be invited to share their memories and stories of Jenkins' impact on them. The memories may be submitted in print or online using a Jotform survey (https://form.jotform.com/24140548738053). The recollections will be accumulated and added to the Rodney Jenkins archive at the NSLM, forming a vast repository and fitting tribute to a legendary multi-faceted sporting figure.

Image credits must accompany images:

Howard Allen, Rodney Jenkins and Idle Dice Competing at Upperville, Jimmy Wofford as Jump Judge, 1974. Black and white photograph. Courtesy of the Upperville Colt & Horse Show.