



## Owner Candidate

# R. LARRY JOHNSON

Larry Johnson, when he was first elected to the MTHA Board of Directors in 2011, advocated for proper governance, transparency in operations and decision-making, and ensuring that the interests of all horsemen are represented. Johnson, who owns Legacy Farm in Virginia but historically has been very active in breeding and racing in Maryland, has stuck with those objectives through multiple terms on the board. He has been involved in the transformation of the MTHA as it continued to provide more services for horsemen and backstretch workers, particularly in the last five years.

Along with his breeding and racing business, Johnson, a native of Prince George's County, Md., is a certified public accountant who specializes in forensic accounting and frequently provides expert testimony throughout the country. He owns Veris Consulting, which has offices in Virginia and Florida. Johnson is particularly interested in the implementation of the master plan to rebuild Laurel Park and Pimlico Race Course under the Racing and Community Development Act of 2020 and is advocate for strengthening the integrity of horse racing.

"I want to ensure that the plan as it was presented and approved by the MTHA Board of Directors is the plan that is implemented," Johnson said. "The plan for the transition period requires significant input. What we do in the next two or three years is of paramount importance."

The plan as presented would make Laurel Park the only facility in North America with three racing surfaces: dirt, turf and synthetic.

Johnson noted that a synthetic Tapeta surface in addition to the existing dirt track and turf course was a major selling point of the master plan when it was announced in 2019. Along with the equine safety component, a synthetic surface has value when races come off the turf or in the winter when the weather is unfavorable, and could be a selling point to attract more horses and horsemen to Maryland, he said.

"I think the situation with the turf at Laurel is unacceptable," Johnson said. "When we have bad weather, field size is decimated. No one is doing anything about it—the course doesn't drain properly."

As for integrity, Johnson said increased scrutiny is needed for horses that win "from unexpected past performances" and trainers with percentages "that don't make sense."