

Upstate New York



# Gary R. Gibson

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Gary Gibson followed his uncle, Avery, into the Standardbred sport. After working for both the Fred Haslip Stable and the Webster Farms training facilities in western New York, Gibson began his driving career on the Buffalo Raceway/Batavia Downs circuit. Following success at those half-mile tracks, the young trainer/driver made a seamless transition to Vernon Downs' chute-attached three-quarter mile oval in the early 1970s with the stated goal of becoming a Grand Circuit reinsman.

Developing into one of Vernon's most sought after catch-drivers, Gibson went on to capture four race-winning titles at the Downs (1979-1981 and 1997). He also ranks among the central NY track's all-time leaders in total victories and two-minute driving credits. In 1991, his best year statistically, "Gibby's" black, gold and green colors visited the winner's circle 125 times and he earned \$396,469 in official purses.

Gibson achieved both his Grand Circuit goal and his ambition to drive in harness racing's top trotting race, the Hambletonian, when he piloted JD's Tryst in the second division of the 1982 edition. He also achieved notoriety and success in the New York Sires Stakes program.

Gibson's quiet personality translated well to his driving style. He had a natural ability to sit patiently with a trotter, but he was equally adept with pacers. Respected and well-liked by his fellow horsemen, Gibson's motto was "You're only as good as your last drive." He was noted for his pleasant, easy-going personality, quick wit and his unique laugh.

Some of the many recognizable horses that Gibson drove include Honest Hobby Horse, Romy the Governor, Midnight Occasion, White Rock Fella, JJ's Apollo, and Rapunzel's Star.

During his career, he amassed 2999 wins and \$ 7,279,567 in purse money.

Gary Gibson died on Friday, Oct. 6, 2006 at the Veteran's Hospital in Syracuse hospital following a courageous battle with cancer. He was 62.