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Saratoga Race Course to honor philanthropist Whitney with Backstretch Pavilion

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Saratoga Springs, NY Plans are underway for the creation of the Marylou Whitney Pavilion at the Saratoga Race Course to honor the late prolific philanthropist and racehorse owner and breeder. Whitney was known for her support of local charities and Saratoga Race Course backstretch workers. In recent years, Whitney and her husband, John Hendrickson, began sponsoring a series of functions for the backstretch workers who care for the thoroughbreds at the Saratoga Race Course, including hosting and attending Sunday dinners in a temporary tent every racing season. The Marylou Backstretch Pavilion will replace the temporary tent used by Whitney and Hendrickson with a permanent building that holds up to 400 people. The Marylou Whitney Backstretch Pavilion is expected to be completed in July 2020.

“Marylou was the heart, the spirit, the personality, the mystique, the beauty and the charisma that represents the best of New York’s horseracing industry,” governor Cuomo said. “Marylou and her husband John were the drivers for the industry’s success, and they were extraordinarily devoted to the wellbeing of the many seasonal backstretch workers who are the backbone of Saratoga Race Course. And that is why I am pleased to announce today that we are going to honor Marylou’s legacy by building a permanent Marylou Whitney Pavilion on the Oklahoma Backstretch to continue to serve the backstretch workers.”

“Marylou’s commitment to the backstretch community, alongside her husband John, was unmatched,” New York Racing Association CEO and president Dave O’Rourke said. “Her decades of consistent support improved the lives of the men and women who sustain racing not only here in Saratoga but around New York State. The Marylou Whitney Pavilion is a fitting tribute to the life and legacy of someone who meant so much to the fabric of Saratoga Race Course. Thanks to governor Cuomo, the Backstretch Appreciation Program will now have permanent home.”

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