

Celebration Announces Judges for 88th Annual Celebration

The Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration has selected Rollie Beard, Derek Bonner, Scotty Brooks, Sam Sorrell and Chad Williams to judge the 88th Annual Celebration.

The Celebration will be held Aug. 26-Sept. 5 and will include five daytime sessions and 11 evening sessions.

This year's judging panel combines extensive experience with the addition of a first-time Celebration judge. Collectively, the panel has 24 years of previous Celebration judging experience, making it one of the most experienced panels in recent memory. None of this year's five judges served on last year's panel. "One of the most important decisions we make each year for our World Grand Championship Horse Show is selecting the judging panel," said Celebration CEO Warren Wells. "We take this responsibility seriously and spend a tremendous amount of time and effort selecting a group that brings experience while continuing to expand our judging pool by giving qualified judges their first opportunity at The Celebration. We are extremely pleased with this year's panel and look forward to a great Celebration." Beard, of Lewisburg, Tenn., will mark the cards at The Celebration for the 10th time. His most recent assignment came in 2020, and he has judged The Celebration in five different decades since making his debut in 1988. Beard has officiated at nearly every major show in the industry and most recently judged The Celebration's Spring Fun Show earlier this year. Bonner, of Mooresboro, N.C., will judge The Celebration for the sixth time, having most recently served on the 2024 panel. He made his Celebration debut in 2013 and has remained a regular at major industry events. Bonner has judged the Spring Fun Show three times, including this year's event alongside Beard. Most recently, he judged the WHTA Fireworks & Freedom Horse Show during the Fourth of July week. Brooks, of Smiths Grove, Ky., will serve on the Celebration panel for the third time after previously judging in 2024 alongside Bonner. Brooks made his Celebration debut in 2017 and has also judged the Spring Fun Show three times. He judged the Money Tree Classic in 2025 and has also officiated this year at the Mid-South Horse Show and Walking for Cancer. Sorrell, of Lexington, Ky., will judge The Celebration for the ninth time, with his most recent assignment coming in 2022. He first judged The Celebration in 2005 and has also officiated at the Celebration Fall Classic three times, most recently in 2025. Sorrell served on the same Fall Classic panel as Williams in 2025. Having judged more than 80 shows during his career, he returns to The Celebration as one of the industry's most experienced judges. Williams, of Murfreesboro, Tenn., will make his Celebration judging

debut this year. He has previously judged several Celebration-managed events, including the 2023 and 2025 Celebration Fall Classic. Williams began his judging career in the early 2000s before stepping away later in the decade to focus on his professional training operation. He returned to judging in 2022 at the Walking for Cancer Horse Show and has since officiated shows including Belfast, Columbia Spring Jubilee and this year's Walking in the Smokies. Williams will judge at the upcoming Red Carpet Show of the South in Pulaski on July 25th.

For more information on the 88th Annual Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, visit TWHNC.com.