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CHRB NEWS RELEASE

AUGUST 8, 2013

KIRK E. BREED

SACRAMENTO, CA – Kirk E. Breed, who began a long and distinguished career in public service in 1963 as a volunteer Peace Corps worker in Chile and concluded his career serving as executive director of the California Horse Racing Board, died Wednesday at the age of 73 following a brave battle against cancer.

Mr. Breed was fully committed to his responsibilities as he continued directing CHRB operations throughout his illness with the assistance of Jacqueline Wagner, the assistant executive director who will oversee the daily CHRB operations until an executive director is named.

Family, friends and colleagues gathered at a Sacramento hospital in his final hours. He is survived by his wife, Mary Ann, and their daughter, Cloe; three children from a previous marriage, Ashley Neumann, Shayna Guigliano, and Monte Breed; three grandchildren, Wyatt and Halle Neumann and Piper Guigliano; and three sisters, Anna Osban, Gloria Headerlin, and Amelia Baugh.

Mr. Breed grew up on the family farm in Choctaw, Oklahoma, and played football in college, contributing to a strong work ethic and an equally strong physique. His homespun ways stood out in the hardboiled world of politics and endeared him to those who appreciated plain speaking and simple truths.

He showed unshakable determination when it came to getting things done, especially when it involved improving a situation that conflicted with his moral compass. This was particularly evident in his efforts to improve the health and safety of racehorses in California. He economized CHRB operations by eliminating unnecessary expenditures and used the savings to fund a Racing Safety Program of his own design that focused on reducing equine fatalities in racing, establishing track safety standards, and developing strategies to reduce injuries in racing and training.

“No one was more dedicated to assuring the welfare of the horse, the well-being of the participants, and the integrity of the sport than Kirk,” said CHRB Chairman David Israel.

Mr. Breed was a Master Mason in Tehame Lodge #3, Sacramento, and a 32nd Degree

Scottish Rite Mason and Past Master of Rose Croix, Sacramento Scottish Rite Bodies.

Despite his cowboy image, he loved classical music and opera.

Mr. Breed's experience with horses dated back to the late 1950s when he helped his father train and race quarter horses while he was attending Oklahoma State University on a football scholarship.

Upon graduating with a degree in zoology, he volunteered for the Peace Corps and spent five years in Chile working in community development, reforestation, designing parks, and land reform. This led to a brief position with the State Department in Washington D.C., and then two years as director of the Peace Corps in Colombia – the youngest person to have ever been appointed director in that region. After returning home in 1972, he worked six years as director of planning and development with the Oklahoma Department of Tourism and Recreation.

During his time in Oklahoma, Mr. Breed was a founding member of the Oklahoma Horse Council and wrote the legislation that became law as the Oklahoma Trails Act.

Mr. Breed was appointed by Governor Jerry Brown as the general manager of the California Exposition and State Fair (Cal Expo) in 1979. Under his leadership, the California State Fair grew into one of the premier agricultural fairs in the country. In addition to directing fair operations, he served as director of racing during the summer fair meet, and in this capacity was a hands-on manager that included everything from negotiating and supervising the harness contract to directing the annual State Fair race meet to driving the tractor during the winter training program.

Mr. Breed left Cal Expo after six years, but before he left he directed the installation of one of the first satellite wagering facilities to open in Northern California in the fall of 1985. He returned to State government in 1988 as senior consultant to the Assembly Governmental Organization Committee. He analyzed all legislation pertaining to horse racing and gaming. He drafted legislation, including major bills pertaining to safety standards at racetracks and satellite wagering. He also served two four-year terms on the Cal Expo Board of Directors

He began his own lobbying and consulting firm in 1990 with clients in the fields of horse racing, agriculture, transportation, entertainment, and mental health. Mr. Breed's principal client was the Pacific Coast Quarter Horse Racing Association, the men and women who breed, own, and train quarter horses.

Given his strong background in horses and government, Mr. Breed was selected by the racing commissioners from a long list of candidates to be executive director effective February 26, 2008.

“I have owned at least one horse my entire life and have made a respectable living working for the horse and horsemen,” he said at the time of his selection. “I became interested in the job when I saw a real commitment by the Board toward meaningful change to benefit the horse-racing industry.”

A memorial service will be held at 2 p.m. on September 7 at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 1300 N Street, in Sacramento. Flowers can be sent to the church. Donations can be made to the Scottish Rite Children's Language Center, 6151 H Street, Sacramento, CA 95819.

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