



It's Melbourne Cup time! The race that stops the nation!

This year marks the 40th anniversary of Aboriginal jockey Frank Reys' historic Melbourne Cup win. Frank was a proud man born of Filipino and Aboriginal parents, although at the time of his win in 1973 he was described only as Filipino by the press.

Overcoming racism and discrimination has been a common experience for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sports people. As we celebrate Frank's magic moment, we also recognise the struggle and achievements of other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sporting champions.

Meet...Frank Reys

Frank Reys' Melbourne Cup win of 1973 put him in the record books as the first Aboriginal Australian to win the coveted trophy—a win which came after years of hard work.

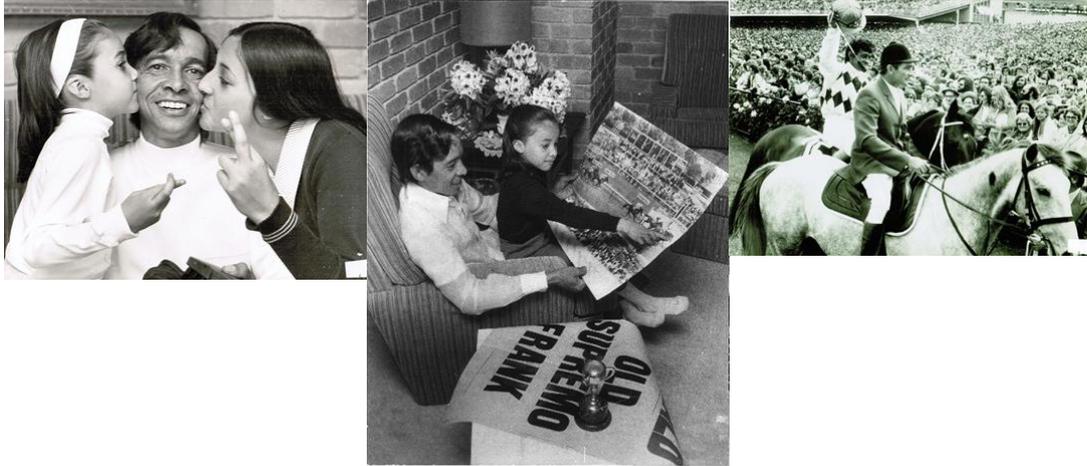
Born in 1931, Frank was the eldest child of his father's second marriage. He was a larrikin, smart and self-motivated. As a child he and his siblings spent much of their time swimming in fresh water creeks, throwing themselves from flying foxes into rivers, and riding wild brumbies through the Atherton Tablelands. Along with his brothers, he would ride all day long and developed a great love for horses. Once older,



Frank sought to turn his riding into a viable career—he wanted to be a jockey. Being young and black it was a hard slog but Frank rose above it and obtained his riding licence in June 1953.

Settling in Melbourne, Frank began a long and successful career as a jockey and on the first Tuesday in November 1973, he won the Melbourne Cup. The press, the neighbourhood and local community was running on overdrive with accolades and adoration. His Melbourne Cup win garnered considerable media coverage and had him labeled as the public's favourite.

Yet, he had been a successful jockey long before the Melbourne Cup. He won the Oaks, the Oakleigh Plate twice, the Lightning Stakes twice, the William Reid Stakes twice, came second in the Derby and came second in the Caulfield Cup just to name a few of his triumphs. In all, he won an impressive 1329 races throughout his career. From his first ride in 1949 to his retirement in 1976, his career was bookended by winning his first and last rides.



Some quick stats...

- **3:19.50**—the time Frank rode on Gala Supreme to win the 1973 Cup. He came from the extreme outside barrier (24) and snared \$153,600 in prize money.¹
- **More than 1000**—the number of races champion Aboriginal jockey Richard "Darby" McCarthy placed in when he rode in Europe.²
- **319**—the number of races won by Jimmy Brown, the most successful Aboriginal driver in Australian Harness Racing today.³
- **5 for 65**—the bowling figures of Eddie Gilbert against a touring West Indies team. Eddie once bowled Sir Donald Bradman out for a duck in 1931 but was never selected in the Australian cricket team and had to seek written permission under the Protection of Aborigines Act 1897 to travel to matches⁴.



Did you know...

- Frank Reys once rode 5 winners in 1 afternoon, after which the trainer said "if I knew you were going to do that I would have given you 6 rides!".
- Wally McArthur, born in 1933 in Borroloola NT, became the Australian under-19 100 yards champion but gave up athletics due to racial prejudice and not being selected in the 1952 Olympic team. He went on to have a successful rugby league career in Britain⁵.
- Percy Hobson won the gold medal in the high jump at the 1962 Commonwealth Games but was advised to keep his Aboriginal background under wraps.⁶

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Melbourne_Cup_winners and <http://www.races.com.au/melbourne-cup/melbourne-cup-history/past-winners/1971-to-1980-melbourne-cup/>

² <http://www.queenslandhistoryofracing.com.au/people/richard-darby-mccarthy/>

³ http://www.harness.org.au/news-article.cfm?news_id=21798

⁴ Colin Tatz and Paul Tatz, 1996. Black Diamonds: The Aboriginal and Islander Sports Hall of Fame

⁵ Colin Tatz and Paul Tatz, 1996. Black Diamonds: The Aboriginal and Islander Sports Hall of Fame

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- Neil 'Nicky' Winmar's match-winning performance against Collingwood brought on some racist taunts from hard-core Collingwood fans. At the end of the game, Nicky famously lifted his jumper and pointed to his black skin.
- Cathy Freeman caused controversy at the 1994 Commonwealth Games by waving both the Aboriginal flag and Australian flag during her two victory laps.
- Racism still exists in sport today—just take, for example, the recent incident of a young AFL fan calling racial abuse at Adam Goodes



Racism. It stops with me is a campaign which invites all Australians to reflect on what they can do to counter racism, wherever it happens.

Take action...

- During your Melbourne Cup celebrations this year, raise your glass to the 40th anniversary of Frank Reys' historic win.
- Get involved in the fight against racism in sport by checking out **Play by the Rules.**
- Read Colin and Paul Tatz's book **Black Diamonds —The Aboriginal and Islander Sports Hall of Fame.**
- Find out what you can do to stand up to racism through the **Racism. It Stops With Me campaign.**
- Sign up to support Reconciliation at **www.reconciliation.org.au.**

Reconciliation Australia would like to thank Shelley Reys for her assistance in developing this factsheet.

Photos: 1. A young Shelley Reys sits with her Dad. Image courtesy of Shelley Reys. 2. Frank Reys with his family. Image courtesy of Shelley Reys. 3. A young Shelley Reys sits with her Dad. Image courtesy of Shelley Reys. 4. Frank Reys after his historic win. Image courtesy of Shelley Reys. 5. Champion harness driver Jimmy Brown. Image courtesy of Australian Harness Racing.

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