



## *Trainer Candidate*

# **CLAUDIO A. GONZALEZ**

Claudio Gonzalez has come a long way as a trainer since his arrival in the United States from Chile in the mid-1990s. Gonzalez, who currently has more than 40 horses stabled at Laurel Park, has won more than 850 races for purse earnings of almost \$24 million. He moved his operation to Maryland in 2012, expanded his stable, and since that time has won multiple meet training titles and three titles as top trainer by wins on the year. In 2020 Gonzalez won two Grade 3 stakes: the Pimlico Special with Harpers First Ride and the Charles Town Oaks with Fly Away Angel.

Gonzalez is active in the claim box but in recent years his name regularly shows up in stakes in Maryland and elsewhere. He began purchasing yearlings and 2-year-olds at auction for various clients and now is in the breeding business as well with a broodmare band and two babies. Gonzalez, who has three children, moved to Maryland because of the growth in the racing program thanks to revenue from casino-style gaming that goes to purses and the stability of a year-round racing program. Gonzalez said he wants to be part of the MTHA board of directors to help ensure things keep moving in a positive direction for all stakeholders.

"I want to be more involved in everything," Gonzalez said. "We don't know anything at times (regarding proposed regulations). We need communication—that is really important to trainers. We don't want to make mistakes."

Gonzalez is an advocate for altering the claiming regulations to benefit owners who sometime must wait a month and a half to run a claimed horse. "The owner has to pay all the time," he said. "It's a little thing but it would better for owners. Sometimes little things make a big difference."

Gonzalez believes in creating a better environment on the backstretch for both horses and those who work with them on a daily basis. He considers it a priority.

"Some barns now don't look good at all," Gonzalez said. "It will also be better for our employees whose (dormitory) rooms are not too good. We need to help these people as much as we can. If they live well, it will be better for everyone on the backstretch."