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ATTENTION: Sports, Assignment, Feature and News Briefs Editors, Cycling Press  
For Further Information Contact:

Dawn C. Wylong, US Bicycling Hall of Fame (908) 268-6771  
Bob Bowen; Public Relations Manager, City of Davis (530) 757-5602  
Diane Parro, Executive Director, Yolo County Visitors Bureau (530)297-1900

## **U.S. BICYCLING HALL OF FAME ANNOUNCES INDUCTEES FOR CLASS OF 2009**

SOMERVILLE, NJ – Four legendary members of the cycling world will be inducted into the U.S. Bicycling Hall of Fame at a Davis, Calif., event. Davis will be the new home of U.S Bicycling Hall of Fame and the induction ceremony will include the unveiling of the new facility.

The four honorees represent a range of cycling pursuits from bicycle motocross (BMX) to Olympians with careers spanning from the 1930's to the present. The inductees are Richard Cortright (Olympian); Phyllis Harmon (cycling contributor); Clayton John (BMX organizer) ; and Nelson Vails, the first African American to medal in bicycling in the Olympics.

"The U.S. Bicycling Hall of Fame is proud to honor these individuals," said Hall of Fame President Dawn Wylong. She said these individuals were selected because of their accomplishments in the sport of cycling and that induction into the Hall of Fame will serve as a poignant reminder of their support, dedication, and sacrifice to the sport.

The November 7th ceremony will be held in Davis, long recognized as the bicycle capital of the United States.

**Richard Cortright** was named Senior Amateur Bicycle League of America's Best All Around Rider of the Year in 1950. He represented the United States at the 1952, 1956 and 1960 Olympics and won a Gold Medal in the Team Pursuit at the 1959 Pan American Games. Cortright turned professional in 1961 and competed in 6-day bicycle races in Canada. He has since traveled across the country as a speaker at "Touch the Torch" ceremonies.

**Phyllis Harmon** has made a tremendous contribution to the sport of cycling by resurrecting the League of American Wheelmen, the oldest bicycling organization in the United States. Harmon, an avid cyclist, revived this organization in 1937 at the early age of 19. Her enthusiasm, spirit of volunteerism, and vast knowledge of cycling brought the organization to national prominence where it has remained during the 66 years of her involvement. The League of American Bicyclists, as it is now known, has 300,000 members and is the leading advocacy group for cyclists and has named their Volunteer Award in her honor.

**Clayton John** has been instrumental in the formation and evolution of the sport of BMX racing. His early years included owning a bicycle shop and coaching the Penn State Cycling team in 1975. He operated a BMX track in 1977 in State College, PA, built ABA tracks from 1980-1985 and is credited with creating many of the rules that govern BMX racing. John has been President of the American BMX Association since 1985 and runs over 30 national level BMX events each year.

**Nelson Vails**, nicknamed "The Cheetah", was the first African American to win an Olympic medal in bicycling in the 1984 Track Sprint. He was a Gold Medalist in the 1983 Pan American Games, 1984 National Sprint Champion, and National Tandem Sprint Champion in 1984, 1985 & 1986. In 1985 Vails earned a silver medal in the Tandem Sprint at the World Championships. Nelson Vails starred

with Kevin Bacon in “Quicksilver” a movie about NYC bike messengers and is a cycling commentator for major TV networks.

The Hall of Fame selects inductees from former competitive cyclists in the following categories: veteran road and track racing: 1970 and before; modern road and track racing: 1971 through 2003; off-road (mountain, cyclocross, or BMX) racing, and contributors to the sport of bicycle racing.

The Hall of Fame -- part museum, membership organization and advocate for all aspects of cycling -- celebrates and preserves cycling's history, promotes safety and fitness, and encourages participation in all cycling activities. Founded more than 20 years ago in New Jersey to reflect that state's rich cycling history, the Hall of Fame is in the process of relocating to Davis, CA.

Davis was chosen as the future home in recognition of the community's strong connections with bicycling. The city pioneered the creation of bicycle lanes in California more than 40 years ago, and the Davis Bike Club hosts premier cycling events including the annual Davis Double Century and the Fourth of July Criterium, one of the oldest races in the western United States.

The public is encouraged to attend the November 7 induction ceremony on the UC Davis campus. The ceremony will include a reception, dinner, a high-profile keynote speaker, and the opportunity to meet and greet all of the honorees. Sales of event sponsorship and table packages as well as individual seating will begin in early July.

For more information and updates on the 2009 Induction Dinner and Award Ceremony, go to [www.usbhof.com](http://www.usbhof.com) or [www.californiabicyclemuseum.org](http://www.californiabicyclemuseum.org)