**John Barleycorn Awards**

**PR/Marketing Campaign Submission: Woodford Reserve’s 2020 Kentucky Derby at Home Campaign**

**Campaign Goals**

For the 2020 Kentucky Derby, KLG Public Relations sought to establish Woodford Reserve as the bourbon to consider for all entertaining occasions around the Kentucky Derby and beyond. They spotlighted Master Distiller Chris Morris as the spokesperson highlighting his expertise in bourbon and tying in Woodford Reserve’s long-standing history in horse racing. Additionally, KLG PR sought to celebrate Richard Sullivan, the 2020 Woodford Reserve Commemorative Kentucky Derby Edition featured bottle artist.

**About the Campaign**

2020 would be the fourth year that KLG PR would launch a campaign in support of their client, Woodford Reserve®, the Presenting Sponsor of the Kentucky Derby® to celebrate “The Greatest Two Minutes in Sports”. Scheduled to take place during the first Saturday in May, the COVID-19 pandemic caused this event, like all others that spring, to be postponed to Saturday, September 5th. This marked the second time that the Kentucky Derby was postponed in its 146-year history – the first being in 1945 when World War II pushed the race from May to early June.

In lieu of being able to conduct in-person media blitzes for Chris Morris and Richard Sullivan, KLG PR took the opportunity to help communicate a message of solidarity and responsible celebrations at home. Through a series of campaigns that laddered up to the overarching theme of Kentucky Derby at Home, KLG PR conducted a virtual media event and supported local brand ambassadors through campaigns that gave back to the communities in their respective cities.

**Derby Events**

Virtual Derby at Home – May 2nd

* Woodford Reserve hosted a day-long virtual experience featuring Master Distiller Chris Morris and Assistant Master Distiller Elizabeth McCall that raised up to $2 million for people impacted by the global pandemic.

$1K Mint Julep Campaign – August 3rd

* 2020 marked 50 years since jockey Diane Crump became the first female to ride in The Kentucky Derby, and Woodford Reserve’s annual $1,000 Mint Julep Cup program celebrated that milestone. A total of 146 Gold and Silver julep cups – celebrating the 146th Kentucky Derby – were sold with proceeds donated in Crump’s honor to the [Permanently Disabled Jockeys Fund.](https://pdjf.org/)

Bourbon & Brush with Richard Sullivan – virtual media event – August 19th

* KLG PR hosted 15 media for an intimate “sip and paint” style virtual event where each attendee received a kit filled with cocktail ingredients and paint supplies to learn how to create their own masterpiece, taught by artist Richard Sullivan. The two-hour event allowed journalists to craft their own mint julep with Chris Morris, and then paint their cocktail and interview Richard to listen to his path from being a former MLB pitcher with the Atlanta Braves to realizing his passion for painting and turning it into a profession after retiring from baseball.

Derby Goes to Hollywood – September 5th

* Woodford Reserve hosted a one-hour livestreamed virtual event called “Derby Goes Hollywood” that featured guests including Julz Tocker (Dancing with the Stars), Erik Miles (VH1 Love and Listing) and celebrity mixologist Charity Johnston, among others. Viewers had a chance to peek into the celebrity homes to see how they celebrate the Greatest Two Minutes in Sports.
* The event benefited [Mini-Therapy Horses,](https://www.minitherapyhorses.com/) a non-profit charity in Los Angeles, where trained miniature horses visit and provide comfort to those in crisis. This volunteer-run charity exists solely on [donations](http://www.minitherapyhorses.com/donate/).

**Results**

KLG PR’s media efforts led to a total of **6.4+ BILLION impressions** around all the Kentucky Derby campaign period from March 2 (first official announcement of the Derby Edition Bottle) – September 5, 2020 (Kentucky Derby).

This number is in comparison to 737+ Million impressions in 2019, despite not having any in-person events in 2020.

**Images**

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/vpjy2n11st4n5us/AAAVrLxCRkyRHd_9_4Htz7noa?dl=0>