**In 1963, Bob Cacchione** organized a riding club at Fairleigh Dickinson University Teaneck campus to continue his equestrian pursuits while in college. Convincing the administration to include riding in the school’s curriculum, Bob became the youngest member of the faculty as the riding instructor while still an undergraduate student. He organized the first intercollegiate horse show with his team competing against riders from the FDU Madison campus. The following year, the number of competing teams grew to seven, then ten. It was obvious that other colleges were interested and in 1966-1967 Bob asked other colleges to host shows. As word spread, Bob came up with a name for the competitions, and the title, Intercollegiate Horse Show Association, was born that spring.

**The 1970’s were a decade of growth for the IHSA.** By 1971, the association had schools from five states competing and an alumni division had been created. Cacchione envisioned a national championship show in the future, with the country being divided into regions. Each region would send its best two teams to compete at the national championship in a head-to-head format instead of just naming a high point team at the end of each year. The Cartier Cup was donated to the IHSA by Cartier Jewelers in 1971, becoming the first team perpetual trophy to be awarded to the national champion team. The Cartier Cup remained in use until 1992 when it was retired and replaced by the Miller’s Trophy.

**During the 1972-1973 academic year, the IHSA reached a milestone** when it was split into two regions. The University of Mass. – Amherst was named as the President College of Region 1, with St. Lawrence University named as President College of Region 2. In the fall of 1973, the association had once again grown and a third region was added, encompassing all of New England. The spring of 1974 saw the first IHSA National Horse Show being hosted by Buck’s County Community College, held at Peacefield Farm in New Hope, PA. Eight individual classes were held, with Marty Webster of Bennett College being crowned winner of the High Point open rider finals. Bennett College of Millbrook, NY won the Cartier Cup as the High Point College over Colby-Sawyer from Region 3 and Northampton Area Community College from Region 1. By this time, word was spreading of the organization through alumni riders or others associated with teams from the north. In 1975 the IHSA expanded into Virginia to add a fourth region to the growing association. Sweet Briar College became the first college to join from the south, and was quickly joined by the University of Virginia and other Virginia schools. In 1977, the IHSA went international with the addition of Humber College of Ontario, Canada into Region 2. IHSA riders also traveled to Austria and Germany where they competed against equestrians from six other nations in dressage and show jumping. The national horse show moved to the south for the first time, as Claiborne and Tom Bishop hosted for the University of Virginia.

During the 1977-1978 school year, a new region was created encompassing much of Ohio through Tennessee. This new region also hosted some experimental western shows prior to having the western discipline compete for real in the 1978-79 season. The national horse show in 1979 held hunt seat team classes for the first time and defending champions, Centenary College for Women, repeating as victors after suffering the loss of their coach. Western classes were held at the show and a special visitor attended, as US Vice-President Mondale attended to cheer for his daughter who rode for St. Lawrence University.

**The 1980’s starts the Southern Seminary “dynasty”** during which the school would win seven national team championships under legendary coaches, Pam and Russ Walther and JT Tallon. One of their most decorated students, Beezie Patton Madden, won the Cacchione Cup in 1984 and continued on to become a staple on the United States Equestrian Team winning two Olympic Team gold medals and an individual bronze medal. Other notable riders from the 1980’s include Peter Wylde, winner of the Cacchione Cup in 1986 and teammate of Beezie at the Olympics in 2004, Greg Best, winner of the Open Flat class in 1986 and Olympic Silver Medalist in both team and individual competition in 1988, and CeCe Williamson, the only rider to win the Cacchione Cup three times. In 1986, Miller Harness Company became a major sponsor of the IHSA contributing “Collegiate” saddles to each individual hunt seat winner, a tradition that continues today. Miami University of Ohio and Murray State became the Western teams to beat, winning the majority of the team national championships during the 1980’s. The AQHA National Champion High Point Open Rider award was established, with the AQHA also donating a trophy for the Champion Stock Seat Team. Western saddles for the individual class winners at nationals will begin to be awarded in 1992 at the 25th Anniversary National Championships.

**In 1992 the IHSA turned 25 with over 4,000 riders from 191 colleges** competing throughout the year. The IHSA has spread throughout the country and the national horse show heads west through Texas and Colorado to California in 1996. Skidmore College’s Hunt Seat team, coached by Cindy Ford, is dominant at Nationals throughout the ‘90’s, as are the Oklahoma State Stock Seat Team coached by Ollie Griffith. As the organization continues to grow, new zones and regions are added. In 1999 the original organization was dissolved and IHSA, Inc. was incorporated as a non-profit organization for the benefit of all collegiate riders.

**As it reaches its 50th anniversary,** the IHSA is an organization that includes over 10,000 riders from over 400 schools. Highly praised for its structure of competition, the IHSA allows riders with various degrees of experience in the hunter and western rider disciplines to compete individually or on a team. Competition plays a role, but student enthusiasm and team spirit are the major objectives. Emphasis is on learning, sportsmanship and fun.

The Association was founded on the principle that any college student should be able to participate in horse shows, regardless of their financial status or riding level. The IHSA attempts to eliminate the expenses of students owning horses and allows more students to compete. Students ride horses that are furnished by the host college and chosen by drawing lots. The use of personal tack is not allowed and schooling is not permitted. The theory behind this structure is to equalize variables of the competition and test the horsemanship of the contestants. Classes range from walk/trot for first year riding students, to the Open Division for the more experienced riders.

**With broader horizons, the future of the IHSA looks bright. For more information, please visit** [**www.ihsainc.com**](http://www.ihsainc.com)