

# 2018 Hall of Fame Inductees

## Charly Crawford - Timed Event

Charly Crawford won the team roping at the 2006 and 2017 St. Paul Rodeo, grew up attending the rodeo as a kid. Born and raised fifteen miles from St. Paul, in Canby, he competed at peewee rodeos in the St. Paul Rodeo arena and has never missed a year of pro rodeo competition there, since he got his PRCA card 22 years ago.



Crawford remembers sitting in the stands during slack, watching legendary team ropers like Leo Camarillo, Jake Barnes, Dee Pickett, and Mike Beers compete. “I watched a lot of runs in that arena,” he said. He also remembers, as a kid, chasing down the paper American flag that was shot out of the cannon during the national anthem each year. One year, he got it, and “I had it hanging on my wall for forever.”

Crawford’s favorite parts of the St. Paul Rodeo are the victory lap around the trees, the wild horse race and the wild cow milking. He loves the fans as well. “Every year that rodeo is packed. It’s electric in the arena. They do a good job of keeping the crowd into it. It’s fun.”

Crawford is a nine-time Wrangler National Finals Rodeo qualifier (2005-07, 2009-10, 2012-14, 2017) who won the Oregon High School Rodeo team roping title in 1996. He is married to seventeen-time Women’s Professional Rodeo Association all-around winner Jackie Hobbs Crawford.

## A. J. Swaim - Rough Stock Rider Event

Former bull rider **A.J. Swaim**, Canby, Ore., grew up in Arlington, Ore., moved with his family to Redding, Calif., and came back to Oregon to attend college.



In 1972, his first year of rodeo, he competed in St. Paul, and he was there nearly every year till he quit riding bulls in 1985.

The two-time National Finals Rodeo qualifier (1975, '77) won the St. Paul rodeo in 1982 and still wears the buckle. “For us, at that time,” he said, St. Paul “was our hometown rodeo.” He loves the small-town atmosphere at the big-time event. “I think it’s just great that such a little town can put on such an amazing event. During the rodeo, the town is like a balloon. It expands.”

In 1985, while sitting in a motel room in Denver, Swaim decided to quit rodeo. He was tired of the down time between rodeos and had been involved in residential construction. He went to work with fellow cowboy Bob Koch, who had introduced him to the building industry.

Swaim’s father, Bob, a bareback rider and steer wrestler, won the bareback riding at the St. Paul Rodeo in 1954, tying with Harry Tompkins. Swaim is a director on the Canby Rodeo board.

## Smith & Velvet - Animal Inductee

The Christensen Brothers horse **Smith and Velvet** is the animal inductee into this year's St. Paul Rodeo Hall of Fame.

The big palomino was purchased by Bob and Henry Christensen in the mid 1960's from the Fort McDermitt Paiute and Shoshone Indian Reservation near McDermitt, Nevada.



The gelding started his rodeo career as a saddle bronc horse, but after he gained a reputation for bucking for five or six seconds, then spinning, Bobby Jr., the son of Bob, turned him out to pasture for a year.

In 1975, Christensen loaded Smith and Velvet up and brought him back to rodeos, this time in the bareback riding. The horse, a late bloomer, had found his niche. "He was spectacular," Christensen said.

Smith and Velvet started his rodeo career with a different name. At the time, the St. Paul Rodeo was the Christensen Brothers' biggest contract, and Gene Smith, secretary for the rodeo, "had a lot of influence" with the committee, Bobby said, so the horse was named Mr. Smith after Gene. When Black Velvet Whisky began sponsoring pro rodeo stock contractors' awards, the word "velvet" was added to the horse's name, and the "mister" was dropped.

Smith and Velvet won the PRCA's Bareback Horse of the Year four times (1977, 79-80, 82). He died in 1983 in a truck accident, as he was coming home from a rodeo in California.

Smith and Velvet joins Henry and Bob Sr. in the St. Paul Rodeo Hall of Fame. The horse was inducted into the ProRodeo Hall of Fame last August.

## Sam & Claudia (Ernst) Smith - St. Paul Rodeo Members

St. Paul residents **Sam and Claudia (Ernst) Smith's** involvement in the rodeo began when both of them were children.



Sam remembers riding his Shetland in the arena and running livestock out on horseback. Claudia recalls picking strawberries to earn money for a rodeo outfit: new jeans and a shirt, to wear to the rodeo.

They married in 1959 and their involvement continued. They helped with the trail ride breakfast, and worked on regular rodeo committees as well.

Sam served as a rodeo director from 1975 to 1979. He was co-chair of the gates committee for twenty years, beginning in the 1990s, and Claudia joined the Wild West Art Show committee in 2001.

Their children: Jennifer Crosby, Kay Ford, Jeanne Zielinski and Monte Smith are also rodeo members. Jennifer and her daughter Jackie are both past St. Paul Rodeo queens.

## Dick & Eileen Buyserie - St. Paul Rodeo Director & Member

**Dick and Eileen (Hiller) Buyserie** are the second director and member-couple to be inducted into the Hall of Fame. Married in 1969, they began their time with the St. Paul Rodeo the next year. They helped with the gates and ticket office committees and worked as co-chairmen of the trail ride breakfast.



Dick was well-known for his meticulous grounds-keeping of the stadium and grounds, as well as serving as concessions committee chairman, while Eileen distributed brochures and organized the first banking committee for the rodeo. Dick was a rodeo director from 1998 through 2012, serving as president in 2007-2008, and was in charge of the Wild West Art Show for several years. Eileen passed away in 2013, and their son Jeff and his wife Melissa are now co-chairs for the trail ride breakfast.