

2019

Hall of Fame Inductees

ELAINE SMITH – Rodeo General Membership



Elaine, of St. Paul, has spent her whole adult life as a member of St. Paul Rodeo Association. She served as Princess in 1947 and Queen of our rodeo in 1948. Her dad, John W. Smith was a rodeo director 1946-52. Mom Kathleen was a Co-Chair of our rodeo ticket committee. Elaine remembers that before she served as rodeo royalty, Anne Smith took her and some friends to Stevens and Son Jewelers in Salem to sell rodeo tickets after school got out for summer.

She married David C. Smith in 1954 and they became SPR members. That involved working in the ticket office and serving on the Trail Ride lunch committee. In 1975, daughter Sally Smith Johnson joined our rodeo court as Princess. Granddaughter Rebecca “Sis” Johnson became Queen in 1998 and her sister Camie was Princess in 2000 and Queen in 2001. Camie later became Miss Rodeo Oregon.

Elaine says “of course we were involved - in the early days, rodeo activities were the only game in town.” St. Paul Rodeo has become a family affair with this Smith family. Sally was royalty, and worked on the Queen and Court Committee and Parade. Son Dave is a current Rodeo Director, daughter Lynn is a past competitor in the Girl’s Barrel Race, and son Ben has served the rodeo well from his leadership position in St. Paul Fire Dept.

BOB GREGORY – Rodeo General Membership



Bob, of Woodburn, joined St. Paul Rodeo in 1965 with his wife Karen. He began his work with us as a gateman, and soon joined Steve Coleman’s livestock committee where he has organized and bossed the “out-gate” boys. Bob first fell in love with St. Paul Rodeo at age 12, when he says “I rode my horse from Donald with some friends and camped near the rodeo carnival.” He competed in our Wild Horse Race at age 18.

Bob spent most of his work life in the trucking business, both for a company and for himself. He has worked part-time for Coleman Corrals transporting livestock. His wife

Karen passed away in May of 2009, and in May of 2014 he married wife Sharon. They are both proud SPR members. Bob's daughter Tami Kuntz is on the rodeo Queen and Court committee and lives near Bend with husband Joel. Sons Jerry and Danny live nearby and Tom is in Texas.

Bob's niece Sally Gregory Knowles is the mother of rodeo steer wrestling great, Trevor Knowles. Bob has fond memories of working this rodeo over the years with the likes of Tex Irwin, Butch Berhorst, and Bob Hagenauer.

GRANT MCKILLIP – Rodeo Directors/Officers



Grant is a lifelong St. Paul resident and has been a St. Paul Rodeo member his entire adult life. Both of his grandfathers - John G. McKillip, Sr. and Maurice Smith were SPR founders in 1936. His dad, Ted McKillip was a rodeo director for 30 years and uncle John spent some time on the board as well.

Grant and his wife Debi have chaired the Queen and Court committee and the BBQ Cook-Off, and Grant currently heads up Hospitality, Fireworks, and Insurance. With Debi's help, Grant was Treasurer for many of his early years on the board. He is the only SPR Director ever to hold all four of our officer positions during his tenure.

Through the year, Grant and Debi and son Cody run a successful catering company. Grant's children Matt, Cody, and Katlyn are all St. Paul Rodeo members and continue the family tradition with St. Paul Rodeo.

Grant believes the greatest benefit of his family's rodeo involvement is the many wonderful people they have met through this connection. Grant enjoys his friendship with many past and current SPR contestants. His favorite event by far is Saddle Bronc Riding - the Classic event of Pro Rodeo!

RICHARD ERNST – Riding Event



Richard won the Wild Horse Race Event seven times between 1971 and 1981 with Mike Merten. They added Tom Coelho to their team and won the WHR at Pendleton Round-Up in 1977-78-80. In 1988 and 89 he teamed with Mike Flanagan and Dave Piper for his "comeback tour" and won his 4th Pendleton buckle in 1989. This success got them a trip to the WHR Finals.

Richard's family includes wife Carolyn, and children Angela, Ben, Madeline, Kimmie, Nick and Andy. Daughter Kimmie was SPR Princess in 2008 and Queen in 2009. Richard's work life has been as a farmer and machinist.

His family business is Ernst Family Farm selling peaches, apples, and filberts. He and Carolyn have been on our Queen and Court committee for 13 years, parade committee, hospitality, and he has judged the Wild Horse Race and Wild Cow Milking for over 20 years.

Richard has traveled the west to many rodeos and appreciates the “neat and clean, well-kept facilities” here at his hometown St Paul Rodeo.

BUTCH KNOWLES – Riding Event



Butch, of Heppner, Oregon has been a friend of St. Paul Rodeo for the majority of his cowboy life. He started out in Central Oregon and now has a family ranch on Butter Creek near Heppner. His first big splash in rodeo was in 1973 when he became the National HS Rodeo All Around Champion. Butch went to the High School and College National Finals rodeos three times each. He joined the PRCA in 1974.

Among Butch’s many championships, he won the Saddle Bronc Riding and All Around here at St Paul in 1979. Other elite rodeos won include Calgary, Pendleton, Salinas, and the Cow Palace. Butch qualified four times for the NFR and won the Bronc Riding average in 1987.

Butch began his television/radio broadcasting career in 1988. Among other rodeo events, he has been the color analyst for the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo every year since 1989, a 30 year span. In his “real” life, Butch stays busy on the ranch with his wife, Mary, and sons Brian and Blake and their families. Blake and cousin Trevor Knowles are accomplished cowboys in their own right.

Butch says “I am honored to be selected to the St. Paul Rodeo Hall of Fame. I won’t ever forget the great feeling arriving at the best and most prestigious 4th of July rodeo. It was like coming home after being on the road. Your sell-out crowds and the nostalgic feeling you get competing in that arena is something you never forget.”