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For the St. Paul Rodeo

CLAIM TO FAME

St. Paul Rodeo to induct five to Hall of Fame

St. Paul, Ore. (June 19, 2023) – Five individuals will be inducted into the St. Paul Rodeo Hall of Fame on June 29.

Debi McKillip (rodeo general membership category); Brittany Pozzi Tonozzi (timed event category); Eric Layton (contract personnel category); David Bothum (riding event category); and Frank Kirsch, Sr., (rodeo director category) will be honored in St. Paul Rodeo history.

When **Debi McKillip** started dating her now-husband Grant McKillip in the late 1970s, one of their first dates was helping with the Jaycees Bullpen at the rodeo.

And because she wasn't old enough to serve beer, she sold beer tokens.

The couple married in 1981 and joined the St. Paul Rodeo Association soon after that. McKillip has helped in a variety of areas. She's worked in the Tack Room Saloon, served concessions, [worked on the queen and court committee](#), sold tickets, and helped with the book keeping.

Now she and Grant head up the hospitality committee, providing meals for several thousand contestants, volunteers and sponsors for lunch and supper throughout the rodeo. Since 1977, McKillip has only missed one year of the rodeo, in 1983, when their son Cody was born.

“This is a family thing,” she said. “Both of Grant’s granddads are (rodeo) founders. It’s pretty much expected, and it’s been fun.”

All three of their children: Matt, Cody and Katlyn Feldtman, are St. Paul Rodeo Association members; Cody was elected as a director last year.

Brittany Pozzi Tonozzi won the barrel racing at the St. Paul Rodeo five times within eight years (2006-07, 09, 2012-13). The 2007 and 2009 world champion barrel racer, Pozzi Tonozzi will compete again this year in St. Paul, and considers the rodeo in a class of its own.

“The St. Paul Rodeo is like no other and should be on the bucket list for serious rodeo fans,” she said. She is married to team roper Garrett Tonozzi; they have a daughter, Tinlee.

The only cowgirl to have won the barrel racing at St. Paul more times than Pozzi Tonozzi is Charmayne James, who won the event six consecutive years. James is a 1999 St. Paul Rodeo Hall of Fame inductee.

For bullfighter **Eric Layton**, coming to St. Paul was like coming home.

The Red Bluff, Calif. man worked the rodeo from 2006 to 2021 and, like many of the rodeo contract personnel, stayed at the Grant and Debi McKillip ranch bunkhouse during the rodeo and while traveling through the area to work other rodeos.

As caterers, the McKillips' refrigerators would be full of leftover chicken. Layton jokes that he made sure to not eat chicken before coming to St. Paul. "I would try not to eat chicken all year long, because I knew when I got to St. Paul, they had a lot of leftover chicken, and it was chicken for breakfast, chicken for dinner, and after the Tack Room Saloon shut down, it was supper."

The rodeo grounds are about a mile from the McKillip ranch, and if Layton walked to the ranch after a long night in the Tack Room Saloon, he'd have to dodge irrigation sprinklers in the hops fields. "I'd time the gosh darn sprinklers so you could run through the fields and not get wet." He loves the St. Paul Rodeo. "Any contract person or contestant will tell you, when you have a good spot to stay, and it's not a hotel room, and they treat you like family, it's awesome. It's my home away from home."

David Bothum, an inductee in the riding event contestant category, grew up in Silverton and now lives in Hermiston.

The saddle bronc rider competed in the 1980s, winning reserve champion in 1983, the same year his uncle Jim Bothum won first place. David learned the discipline from Jim, who won the St. Paul Rodeo not only in '83 but eighteen years prior.

David followed his father, Kermit, into the construction business. He and his wife Cyd have two children: son, Ryan, and daughter Mykael.

Bothum and Butch Knowles founded the Hermiston Farm-City Rodeo in 1988.

Frank Kirsch, Sr., who is deceased, joined the St. Paul Rodeo Association in 1938 and was elected to a term as a director in 1954. With his wife Mag, he headed up the rodeo advertising and manned the arena out-gate. He helped organize road trips around the state to distribute rodeo posters and brochures.

Their children Frank Jr. and Ken and their families are still involved with the rodeo.

The Hall of Fame Barbecue honoring the Class of 2023 will be held June 29 at the St. Paul Rodeo arena. It begins at 5 pm. A meal will be served, with live and silent auctions. Auction proceeds benefit the St. Paul Rodeo Foundation.

Tickets for the Barbecue are \$40 and are not available at the door; they must be purchased in advance. They can be purchased online at StPaulRodeo.com

This year's rodeo is June 30-July 4, with performances each evening at 7:30 pm and a 1:30 pm matinee on July 4.

For more information, visit the website or call the rodeo office at 800.237.5920.

Cutlines:

Saddle bronc rider David Bothum is a 2023 inductee in the St. Paul Rodeo Hall of Fame. The Hermiston man was a saddle bronc rider who grew up in Silverton, Ore. and now lives in Hermiston. Photo courtesy St. Paul Rodeo.

St. Paul resident Debi McKillip has been volunteering for the rodeo in a variety of areas since 1977; she is in the St. Paul Rodeo Hall of Fame Class of 2023. Photo courtesy St. Paul Rodeo.

Eric Layton was a bullfighter at the St. Paul Rodeo for fifteen years. The Red Bluff, Calif. man considers St. Paul as "home." Photo courtesy St. Paul Rodeo.

Brittany Pozzi Tonnozi has won the St. Paul Rodeo barrel racing five times and is a member of the 2023 St. Paul Rodeo Hall of Fame class. Photo courtesy St. Paul Rodeo.

Frank Kirsch, Sr., served a term on the St. Paul Rodeo Board of Directors in 1954. He helped with advertising and often made road trips around the state to distribute rodeo posters and brochures. Photo courtesy St. Paul Rodeo.

St. Paul Rodeo

2023 HALL OF FAME

Timed Event Cowgirl
Brittany Pozzi Tonozzi

Riding Event Cowboy
David Bothum

Contract Personnel
Eric Layton

SPR Officers/Directors
Frank Kirsch, Sr

SPR Member
Debi McKillip

