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For the St. Paul Rodeo

HONORING SPECIAL PEOPLE

St. Paul Rodeo to induct five into its Hall of Fame

St. Paul, Ore. (June 26, 2019) – The St. Paul (OR) Rodeo has announced its 2019 inductees into its Hall of Fame.

They are Bob Gregory and Elaine Smith, in the category of Rodeo General Membership; Grant McKillip, Rodeo Directors/Officers; and Richard Ernst and Butch Knowles, both in the Riding Event category.

Bob Gregory, of Woodburn, fell in love with the St. Paul Rodeo at the age of twelve, when he rode his horse from Donald to St. Paul and camped near the rodeo carnival. At the age of eighteen, he competed in the rodeo's wild horse race, and in 1965, he and his wife Karen joined the St. Paul Rodeo General Membership.

Throughout his time as a rodeo volunteer, he worked as a gateman and with the livestock committee. His wife Karen passed away in 2009, and five years later he married Sharon. Bob's daughter Tami Kuntz is on the rodeo queen and court committee, and Bob's niece Sally Gregory Knowles is the mother of rodeo steer wrestling great Trevor Knowles.

Elaine Smith, St. Paul, was born into a family committed to helping with the rodeo. Her dad, John W. Smith, was a rodeo director from 1946 to 1952, and her mother, Kathleen, was co-chair of the rodeo ticket committee. Smith remembers selling rodeo tickets in Salem as a youngster, and served as the St. Paul Rodeo Princess in 1947 and Queen the following year.

Smith married David C. Smith in 1954 and they spent their married life as St. Paul Rodeo members, with Smith continuing as a member after her husband's passing. They worked in the ticket office, served the trail ride lunch, and in 1975, their daughter, Sally Smith Johnson, was the St. Paul Rodeo Princess. Their granddaughter, Rebecca "Sis" Johnson was queen in 1998 and her sister Camie was princess in 2000 and queen in 2001. Camie went on to serve as Miss Rodeo Oregon.

Being part of the rodeo was natural for Elaine. "Of course we were involved," she said. "In the early days, rodeo activities were the only game in town." Her son Dave is a current rodeo director.

Grant McKillip goes into the Hall of Fame in the category of Rodeo Directors/Officers, following in his dad and granddads' footsteps as a director. His grandfathers: John G. McKillip, Sr. and Maurice Smith were rodeo founders in 1936, and his dad, Ted, was a rodeo director for thirty years.

McKillip and his wife Debi currently serve as chairmen for the hospitality, fireworks and insurance committees. In the past, they have chaired the queen and princess committee and the Barbecue Cook-off committee. Their children: Matt, Cody and Katlyn, are all St. Paul Rodeo members.

Two men enter the St. Paul Rodeo Hall of Fame in the Riding Events category.



Richard Ernst, St. Paul, won the wild horse race at the St. Paul Rodeo seven times during an eleven year span, from 1971-1981. He did well in the wild horse race at the Pendleton (Ore.) Round-Up as well, winning it in 1977-1980 and again in 1989.

He and his wife Carolyn have served on the queen and royal court committee, the parade committee, the hospitality committee, and he has been the wild horse race and wild cow milking judge for over two decades.

Their daughter, Kimmie, served as the St. Paul Rodeo Princess in 2008 and queen the next year.

Ernst loves his hometown rodeo, appreciating “the neat, clean and well-kept facilities.”

Butch Knowles, Heppner, Ore., is best known as one of the faces and voices broadcasting the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo (WNFR), but at St. Paul, he is the 1979 saddle bronc riding and all-around champions.

1He competed at the WNFR four times, winning the saddle bronc riding average in 1987, and began a broadcast career in 1988. He has been the color analyst for the WNFR every year since then. He and his wife Mary have a ranch near Heppner with sons Brian and Blake.

Knowles loved competing at St. Paul during his pro rodeo days. “I won’t ever forget the great feeling of arriving at the best and most prestigious Fourth of July rodeo. It was like coming home after being on the road. The sell-out crowds and the nostalgic feeling I got competing in that arena is something I’ll never forget.”

The 2019 class will be honored during the rodeo’s annual Hall of Fame barbecue on July 1 at 5 pm at the rodeo grounds. A meal will be served and live and silent auctions will raise funds for the Justin Cowboy Crisis Fund. Tickets for the meal are \$32 and are not available at the door; they must be purchased in advance. They can be purchased online at www.StPaulRodeo.com.

This year’s rodeo runs July 2-6, with performances each evening at 7:30 pm and a 1:30 pm matinee on July 4. Tickets are on sale online.

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

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Cutlines:

Bob Gregory began his involvement with the St. Paul Rodeo at the age of twelve, when he rode his horse from Donald to St. Paul to watch the rodeo. He has worked as a gateman and with the livestock at the rodeo. He is a 2019 St. Paul Rodeo Hall of Fame inductee.

Elaine Smith, St. Paul, is a 2019 inductee into the St. Paul Rodeo Hall of Fame. Born into a family heavily involved in the rodeo, she has been a St. Paul Rodeo member since 1954.

Grant McKillip, St. Paul, was treasurer for the board for many years, and, along with his wife Debi, currently chairs the hospitality, fireworks and insurance committees. Photo by Emily Haven Photography.

Richard Ernst won the St. Paul Rodeo wild horse race seven times; he and wife Carolyn have been volunteers with the rodeo on several different committees.

Butch Knowles is the 1979 St. Paul Rodeo saddle bronc riding and all-around champions, and has served as the color analyst for the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo every year since 1988. He and his wife Mary live near Heppner, Ore.