



ALL COWBOY & ARENA CHAMPIONS HALL OF FAME



Ronald David (dad) & Cody (son) Eckhart



Ronnie Eckhart



Cody Eckhart

Rodeo and the western way of life has been in the Eckhart family for many generations. My granddad John Allen Eckhart or better known by most as Poochy Eckhart was inducted into the All Cowboy and Arena Champions Hall of Fame in 2016. With a resume like his it's no surprise that his son and grandson would go on to continue the family legacy.

I can't tell you what an honor it is for me to get to introduce these next two inductees. My dad Ronnie Eckhart and My Brother Sgt. William Cody Eckhart; two of the most deserving men I know.

So I want to start off today with a little story of a father/son impromptu camping trip.



-We had just bought this horse that Dad took me to get and Cody helped me buy. It was night 2 of the horse being at the house and he decided he would try his luck at jumping out of his pen which was successful. Cody heard the hoof beats in the early morning hours and ran outside to catch him. Instead of putting him back in the pen, Cody decided to tie him to the tree, break out all of his Boy Scout camping equipment and build a fire. I still remember the sound of dad's utter shock when he woke up to find a fire in his back yard and all I could think was "Man Cody is fixing to get it" and then to my shock when dad sat down and Cody poured him a cup of coffee. Out my window it looked like something out of a John Wayne movie.

These 2 have always shared a common bond even though neither one would admit it at the time. Whether it be the western way of life, rodeo or serving their country their personalities mirrored one another.

While serving his country in Germany, Ronnie still found a way to compete in rodeo. Without his roping horse nearby he opted to try his luck riding bucking horse and bulls. While it was fun and he had success he quickly learned that he should stick to the roping pen.

Like father, like son, Cody also tried his hand at rodeo overseas while in Germany serving in the Army. This is where he found 2 things that gave him the greatest joy, Serving his country and still being able to ride bulls. Stories he would tell include laughing when he would show up to a rodeo and they would bring the bulls to the chutes, when they were in fact only steers. He then decided he would also add bareback and saddle bronc to his credentials just for another thrill.

Cody had such a passion for riding bulls that no one person or thing would stop him from riding them. I remember when Cody was a senior in high school and decided to enter the bull riding during the 4th of July rodeo and he told me not to tell Mom and Dad. Well Cody that's not very smart because Mom and dad are both working the rodeo. So my job became keep mom occupied during the bull riding so she didn't find out. The Bull riding started and they announced Cody Eckhart from Rocksprings TX and mom's ears perked up. She looked straight at me and said "There better be another Cody Eckhart from Rocksprings TX" and vanished. Not really sure what happened after that cause I wanted no part of it. Or Mom's favorite story when he was bucking out bulls the night before he was set to run at the State Cross Country meet and Coach Marla caught him in the act. Let's just say Cody got an ear full that night.

Dad has always had a knack at picking out good horses. I believe it was a trade taught to him long ago by his dad. "Always find out where that swirl is on their face" or "What do his eyes tell you." When we picked out my first horse he had been in quarantine for 30 days and had bite marks and

scars all over him. Dad said there was something special about him and that I needed to look beyond the scars. Well we did and there hasn't been a horse to match him yet. Dad and I spent a lot of time hauling up and down the highway to rodeos. Some of my most valued lessons have come from those trips. One of my favorite still to this day is "It's not about what you drive up in but how you and your horse perform in the arena." Even though he put it in rodeo terms I think it applies to a lot of situations we face in life.

From his father's influence handed down to his children and now to his grandchildren, Ronnie has never lost his passion for teaching others. Whether it's leading his granddaughter down the alley way at a barrel race or buying a roping dummy to make sure his grandchildren always know how to swing a loop. He is dedicated to keeping the tradition he grew up with alive for many generations to come.