

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact:
Ruth Nicolaus
319-321-2152

KEEPING IT IN THE FAMILY

Beutler sisters have worked the Elk City Rodeo for years, taking care of office duties

Elk City, Okla. (August 19, 2019) – Rodeo fans rarely see their faces, but these ladies are an integral part of the Elk City Rodeo of Champions, and their family has put on the rodeo for decades.

Sisters Dollie Beutler Riddle and Vickie Beutler Shireman are seldom seen by the fans, but without them, there would be no rodeo.

The women, sisters to Bennie Beutler, work as the secretary and timers at the rodeo, taking entry fees from contestants, keeping time for the roping, wrestling, and barrel racing events, recording times and scores, and submitting paperwork to the Pro Rodeo Cowboys Association.

They have been in the rodeo office, taking care of the rodeo business, since their mother, Una Beutler, was doing the secretary and timer work. They learned working alongside her at rodeos across the nation, when she and their dad, Jiggs, had the Beutler and Son Rodeo Co.

When Dollie was 16 years old, she got her PRCA membership and began working rodeos on her own. Since then, she estimates she's missed the Elk City rodeo only a couple of times.

The women, who are thirteen months apart, grew up on the ranch north of Elk City. They were with their parents during the summers, going to rodeos and helping out. When school started, they were back at home. Grandma Hill, Una's mother, lived at Canadian, Texas. She would stay with them during the week, and on Friday, after school, they'd go home with her for the weekend till their parents were home.

The girls took an interest in trick riding after they saw it at their parents' rodeos. The world-famous trick roper J.W. Stoker was at the Burwell, Neb. rodeo, and his sister was married to Una's brother. "My dad went up to him and asked if he'd be interested in coming to the house to teach the girls to trick ride," Dollie remembered. "We even got Bennie in on it," she said, noting that he learned how to vault.

Dollie was fourteen years old when she learned, and when she was fifteen, she worked her first rodeo at Enid. During high school, she played basketball so she didn't trick ride

as much. But after high school, she trick rode for not only her father's company but others.

The girls were also by their mother's side, often in the crow's nest, where the announcer stood, with a stopwatch in their hand, practicing. Dollie preferred to trick ride; she did more of that while Vickie secretaried. They did perform together, sometimes hurrying to the announcer's stand in their costumes, to run a stopwatch before the next event started.

When Vickie was twenty, she began secretarizing rodeos, while Dollie focused on the trick riding. Vickie would trick ride with Dollie, and Dollie oftentimes timed a rodeo. But it wasn't till Vickie broke her back in Hinton during a Fourth of July rodeo, while warming up a trick riding horse, that her career was over. Dollie was there, too, so she took over the secretary duties, and went on to a rodeo in Coleman, Texas, the next weekend, since her mother was busy at other rodeos.

Occasionally, her dad would have three rodeos on the same weekend, keeping Una and the girls busy, each at their own rodeo. But that didn't happen often, because "we said we weren't doing it," Dollie laughed.

In those days, before the advent of computers and printers, rodeo secretaries typed up the program. Dollie never did enjoy the secretary duties as much as she enjoyed the trick riding, and once, at a rodeo, when she was in her mid-twenties, she was in a hurry to get to the dance after the rodeo. "I got my carbon (for making copies while typing) backwards three times before I got it right," she laughed. "I was hurrying up, trying to get (to the dance.) How can anybody like secretarizing when trick riding is so much easier?" she said.

Dollie works about ten rodeos a year, including both pro rodeos and ranch rodeos. About 25 years ago, Vickie began secretarizing college rodeos, and she works the ten Central Plains collegiate rodeos each year. She does about twenty Beutler rodeos a year.

Vickie has secretaried the Elk City rodeo nearly every year since the early 1970s. There were a few years, when Jiggs was alive, that he had a rodeo in McAlester at the same time as Elk City, and she worked McAlester instead. When Vickie went through cancer treatment in 2009, Dollie secretaried in her place.

Bennie's wife Connie has also kept time at the Elk City Rodeo. A former school teacher, she has retired from timing.

Dollie has missed only three or four years of the Elk City rodeo. She and her husband Rusty were living in Weatherford, Texas, and their sons, Caine and Jade, were playing football. Missing the rodeo was big, she said. "It was like missing Christmas."

Vickie remembers she and her sister carrying the colors in the parade. The parade used to be on Labor Day, and the girls and Bennie went to school in Hammon. School wasn't closed on Labor Day, so they got out of school for the parade. They also carried the flags

in the grand entry, and then would have to be ready to time the rodeo. “You’d have to jump off your horse and run to the announcer’s stand to be ready to blow the whistle for the first bareback ride,” Vickie said.

The women’s families make the rodeo a family holiday. Dollie and Rusty’s kids: Melissa and her husband Corey Navarre and their three daughters; Caine, and Jade and his wife Kara come to Elk City. Vickie and her husband Dennis’ children: Justin and his wife Shanna and their two daughters, and Jennie and her husband Dustin and their three daughters, all come home. They ride in the parade, attend the rodeo, and enjoy each other.

“Being at your hometown rodeo is just fun,” Vickie said. “Your family comes in, it’s busy, and you see a lot of people you haven’t seen for a long time. We take it all in. The Beutlers are a big part of Elk City.”

This year’s Elk City Rodeo of Champions runs August 30-31-September 1 and begins at 8 pm each night. Tickets range in price from \$9 to \$18 and can be purchased at Circle A Western Wear, at Doug Gray Dodge in Elk City, and at the gate. For more information, visit the rodeo’s website at www.ElkCityRodeo.com or call Doug Gray Dodge at 580.225.3005.

- ### -

Cutlines:

Dollie Beutler Riddle (on the right) poses with her sister Vickie Beutler Shireman in vintage cowgirl clothes at the Elk City Rodeo in 2018. The sisters have secretaried and timed the Elk City Rodeo, along with carrying flags and trick riding, since they were teenagers.

Vickie Shireman trick rides at a rodeo in the 1970s. The Elk City woman has secretaried the Elk City rodeo nearly every year since the 1970s.

Vickie and Dennis Shireman pose with their granddaughters, from left to right, Josie, Kalyn, Carlie, Kallie, and Dacie, in 2018. Vickie, a sister to Bennie Beutler and Dollie Beutler Riddle, is secretary and timer at the Elk City Rodeo.

Siblings Vickie Beutler Shireman, Bennie Beutler, and Dollie Beutler Riddle enjoy a laugh. The three, children of Jiggs and Una Beutler, have been part of rodeo since they were children.

Vickie Shireman (on the left) poses with her sister, Dollie Riddle. Both women have worked in the secretary’s office and have timed at the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo.

Dollie Beutler Riddle trick rides at the Phoenix rodeo in 1973. The Vernon, Texas woman has attended the Elk City Rodeo nearly every year of her life, except for three or four, when her sons were playing high school football.