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Indian National Finals Rodeo

Ready-for-Release #6 --- RODEO: IT'S GENERATIONAL

The concept of *FAMILY* should be a simple one --- a group of individuals sharing a legal or genetic bond. For families involved in the rodeo world, that bond is carried beyond the simple definition. For them, family means anyone in chaps who has ever ridden a horse or roped a horse. The rodeo community --- family if you will --- is a large one that frequently gets passed down through generations.

Take the Holyan family of Coyote Canyon, New Mexico. Father Ed is an 8-time INFR world champion tie-down roper. Mother Carole is 2013 INFR world champion ladies barrel racer as well as the only female INFR commissioner (whose father, Dean, was a founding member and one of the first original commissioners of the Indian National Finals Rodeo organization). 12-year-old son Dean, who started roping at age 5, is 2013 Junior breakaway champion while 14-year-old daughter Faith made her first INFR adult division appearance at age 10. And let's not forget niece Kassidy Dennison who is making her own mark in barrel racing, supported by her mom, Debbie (Carole's sister) and dad Karl, another world champion. Add in Carole's little sister Charlene, another world champ, and an uncle or two and the image of an extremely large group whose members have a common interest becomes very clear.

"Indian rodeo is very much a family-oriented event," says INFR General Manager Donna Hoyt, noting that in some events there are families where three or four generations might be competing.

"It's just something we do," says Carole Holyan. "In Native cultures, animals are part of the lifestyle. Growing up, my dad had horses and competed in rodeo and because it was something he did, it was something we did. On the Navajo Nation, rodeo is huge, a way of life for a lot of people."

When the Public Broadcasting System in Wyoming presented a feature story on Indian rodeo, they noted: "Present-day Indian culture encompasses many things including rodeo, which for 40 years has been a professional sport and a nationwide tribal subculture passed from one generation to the next." To quote song lyrics from the sixties that are appropriate here --- "We Are Family."

Ed Hoylan's INFR bio calls him, "an All-Around Championship Cowboy considered by many to be the most talented and versatile cowboy in the world." Over the last decade or so, Holyan has been a dominant competitor in four All Around Championships as well as titles for steer wrestling and calf roping. "A good horse, some finesse, and a 'no fear' attitude have helped me reach those pinnacles," he says. Holyan credits God and the support of his whole family in making possible his arena accolades and

that encouragement is evident with wife Carole frequently found near the roping box during tie-down competition.

While those are big shoes to fill, his partner in life as well as in the arena, is no stranger to Indian pro rodeo honors. Her career includes three-time titles in INFR barrel racing, including her first win in the late 1970s at age 11. She also owns an INFR Women’s All-Around Championship (2 times) and Ladies Breakaway Champion as well. Although she no longer competes, there is still a family rivalry about gold buckles. “Ed gives me a hard time sometimes because I haven’t caught up with him yet,” she says.

“Rodeo represents a really large extended family, just something we do and the way we raise our children. Rodeo teaches our youngsters a lot about life from learning necessary skills to compete to the care and feeding of animals --- all in the company of family and friends.”

The Holyan family and other inter-generational Native American rodeo families will be on hand to help the largest and longest-running professional Indian rodeo organization in the world “promote and preserve the advancement of professional Indian rodeo” at this year’s INFR championships, November 4-8, in Las Vegas.



Pictured Left to Right: Past Indian National Finals Rodeo World Champions (Karl Dennison, Devyn Dennison, Cassidy Dennison, Charlene Jackson, Carole Jackson Holyan, Ed Holyan)

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