

Miss Indian National Finals Rodeo Queen 2019 - 2021 Farewell Video

My name is Oriana Lopez. I am from the Comobabi Village in the Schuk Toak District on the Tohono O'odham Nation. I am the daughter of Sharon Francisco and the granddaughter of Nick Francisco and the late Minnie Francisco. I am also a proud alumni from Arizona State University.

Beginning in October of 2019, I was crowned as your Miss Indian National Finals Rodeo Queen. I had hit the road running, leaving my weekends fulfilled with the duties affiliated with the title, until everything came to a standstill. It was now March of 2020 and every event that I had hoped to travel both in and out of state had been cancelled due to the damaging effects of the pandemic. Despite the halt placed on the rodeo season, the health of Indian Country needed to be placed as priority.

Fast forwarding to the end of 2020, I had received news for the first time in history that the extension of the reign of Miss INFR had been extended into the next rodeo season. I was overwhelmed with excitement and joy to be given the opportunity to continue forward in representing the sport of Indian rodeo across the U.S and First Nations of Canada. However, with rodeos still at a standstill, I was worried on how I would be able to continue to serve the title and fulfill the job I had begun at the end of 2019.

Shortly following the extension of the reign, opportunities including being featured on Wranglers Cowboy to the Core project, followed by Cowgirl Magazine and later being interviewed with Indian Country Today had allowed me to reach others, instill hope and amplify the positive impact of Indian rodeos located within our communities during these difficult times. Throughout my reign, I have been graciously honored to travel to various states including Florida, Wyoming, Texas, Nevada, Oklahoma, Montana and Oregon meeting many individuals from spectators, contractors, rodeo contestants, announcers and rodeo queens. It is those who made the reign of Miss INFR one to cherish.

The sport of rodeo has taught me it's much more than just any sport. It's an outlet, sense of revitalization and a gathering tradition for many. It wouldn't be right if I didn't give credit to those who made my reign possible. Beginning with the Tohono O'odham Nation, Chairman Ned Norris Jr. and Vice Chairwomen Wavalene Saunders, Legislative Council and Department of Natural Resources of the Tohono O'odham Nation and the Comobabi Community for their endless support and encouragement throughout the past two years. Thank you to the families that I have met along my reign for welcoming my family and I with open arms and taking care of us while away from home. Thank you Janet Eleando for being my second mom and assisting me heavily throughout the journey. Thank you Jared Massey for taking time out of your days to hop in for a trip across states and also the endless creations you have sewn throughout the way. Lastly, thank you to my family and friends. Mom and sister, I love you unconditionally. Words can never nearly express my sincere gratitude to you all.

It has been an absolute honor serving as your 2019-2021 Miss Indian National Finals Rodeo Queen.

Sincerely,
Oriana Lopez