

LaCygne Ranch Couple Honored By Women's Professional Rodeo Association

Two of the most ambitious lifetime dedicated rodeo leaders and supporters in the country have been appropriately nationally acknowledged.

John and Candy Teagarden, LaCygne, were honored by the Women's Professional Rodeo Association (WPR) as the "Outstanding Individuals of the Year."

The Linn County ranch couple accepted the award at a WPR lunch during the recent National Finals Rodeo in Las Vegas.

"This award acknowledges individuals who have devoted their time and talents to professional rodeo and the WPR," said Cindy Gillespie.

"Their only compensation is the personal self-satisfaction received from benefiting the sport of rodeo," she verified. A regional WPR director, Gillespie serves the Prairie Circuit including Kansas, Nebraska and Oklahoma.

"We were very surprised and humbled when we got the call that Candy and I were being honored," Teagarden said.



John and Candy Teagarden, LaCygne, have been honored as the "Outstanding Individuals of the Year" by the Women's Professional Rodeo Association (WPR). Presentation was made by Cindy Gillespie, WPR Prairie Circuit director, during the National Finals Rodeo in Las Vegas.

A director of the Linn Country Fair and Rodeo at Mound City 52 years, Teagarden insisted, "It isn't about us. It's about the individuals and small business sponsors who keep this great tradition alive.

"There are six of us 'old timers' who have been on our 30-member fair board since the 1970s," Teagarden said. "Fortunately a bunch of young men and women are now serving too. These board members and volunteers want to continue to keep the Linn County Fair and Rodeo strong."

With county population of about 10,000 people, the Linn County Fair in extreme eastern Kansas has a rich tradition.

"The nine-day early August fair enjoys a strong 4-H and youth program while annually hosting five night shows," Teagarden said.

Believed to be the oldest county fair in Kansas, the 150th anniversary is being celebrated next year. "Our 75th annual rodeo is scheduled for 2021 with many special festivities also planned," the enthusiast director informed.

Nearly every building on the 40-acres fairgrounds has been systematically replaced in the last four decades.

"Our fair and rodeo have enjoyed tremendous support from individuals and local businesses for generations," Teagarden acknowledged.

Rodeo committeemen and volunteers designed and completely replaced the bucking chutes, pens and arena fence in the 1970s and '80s.

"New bleachers and state of the art stadium lighting were installed six years ago," the rodeo director noted.

A contestant and sponsor barbecue meal after both rodeo performances originated in 1990 under Teagarden's leadership.

In the following years, the hospitality meal has expanded to include contestants with their families at all evening fair events. There are two demolition derbies, and a truck and tractor pull as well as the rodeo.

Along with other rodeo committeemen, Teagarden was instrumental in forming the Eastern Kansas Pro Rodeo Series in 1984.

"It was designed to raise awareness of the member rodeos among both contestants and fans," Teagarden said. The Eastern Kansas Series continues today with the professional rodeos at Mound City, Coffeyville and Eureka.

Both the Linn County Fair and Rodeo and the Eastern Kansas Pro Rodeo Series have annually been advertised extensively on 580 WIBW as well as being promoted heavily on WibwNewsNow and the Kansas Ag Network.

Candy Teagarden has provided vital support behind the scenes for efforts of various fair and rodeo committees. "That's been particularly for the publicity and the contestant-sponsor hospitality meals," Teagarden credited.

"Without Candy's support I would have accomplished very little," he admitted.

The Teagardens operate the five-generation family ranch and farm in northern Linn County.

"We've had a registered Quarter Horse breeding program for 30 years concentrating on barrel horse bloodlines," Teagarden said. "Our horses will work in or out of the arena."

Daughters Dana, Amy and Leigh, their spouses and eight grandchildren were credited for being an important part of all activities.

The WPR is the oldest women's sports organization in the country. Headquartered in Colorado Springs, Colorado, it provides opportunities for women's participation in rodeo events across the United States and Canada.

"They compete in the timed events of barrel racing, team roping, breakaway roping, and tie-down roping," Teagarden explained. "The association boasts more than 3,000 members, in excess of 1,500 events and payouts surpassing \$5 million."

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