



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mike Allen to be honored with Driver Award at this year's Ellensburg Rodeo

Ellensburg, Wash. — Historian and Ellensburg Rodeo Hall of Fame founding board member Mike Allen will be honored with this year's Driver Award at the Ellensburg Rodeo.

The award honors a member of the community who has made a significant contribution to the Ellensburg Rodeo, Rodeo Hall of Fame, or associated activities. The Driver family will present Allen with the award during the rodeo finals on Monday, Sept. 7.

"Mike's creative idea, perseverance, and the wonderful result of his labors, made it easy for me to select him as this year's recipient of the Driver Family Memorial Award," Scott Driver said.

The idea for a Hall of Fame came while Allen was conducting research for his book "Rodeo Cowboys in the North American Imagination," which was released in 1998. He's an associate professor of history and American studies at the University of Washington-Tacoma.

The Ellensburg Hall of Fame was founded in 1997. Since then there have been over 75 inductions with new recipients added each year. Allen served as the founding president of the Ellensburg Rodeo Hall of Fame for seven years and remains a member of the board.

The idea, says Allen, was to begin with a Hall of Fame and transition into a museum after records and artifacts were collected. Over the last 19 years, the Hall of Fame has collected more than enough to fill a museum. He hopes to have a museum ready by the time the 100th anniversary of the rodeo rolls around.

"I love what the rodeo is now, everybody loves what the rodeo is now," Allen said. "But we also need to remember what the rodeo used to be."

The Driver family has given out the Driver Award since 2000 to recognize others' contributions to the rodeo. The award is a gold and sterling silver belt buckle, which depicts Lo Driver on his horse Yankee, rearing on his hind legs as he was when Lo delivered an Ellensburg Rodeo invitation for President Harry Truman at the Yakima airport.

ABOUT THE ELLENSBURG RODEO:

This year's rodeo runs from September 4 - 7, 2015. More information about its many competitions and events can be found online at www.ellensburgrodeo.com.

The Ellensburg Rodeo is one of the "old rodeos" and has earned its place as one of America's Top 10 professional rodeos. The Ellensburg Rodeo hosts the World Finale of PRCA's Xtreme Bulls Tour. Started in 1923 with the same volunteer spirit that still "fuels the fire" of today's volunteers, the rodeo has grown from a local competition among ranch hands to the Professional event of today with over 600 contestants and prize money in excess of \$400,000!

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