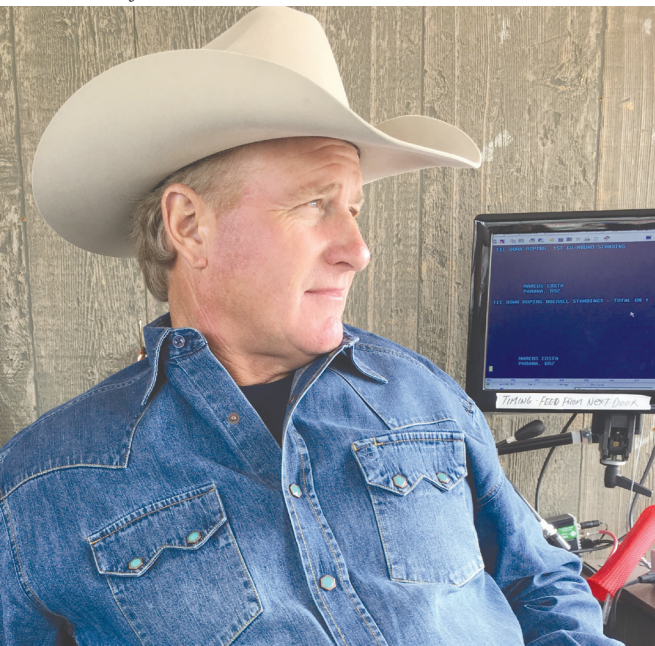


# Knowles inducted into hall of fame

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**Knowles in the TV booth at the Calgary Stampede in Alberta, Canada. While some of Knowles's post-production jobs are weekend affairs, on-site announcing and analyzing can take him away from his home on Butter Creek for more than a week at a time.** -Contributed photo

he says. His high school success continued into college as he won championship after championship, including Northwest regional championships in bareback, saddle bronc, bull riding and all-around cowboy—not once, but several times.

It was also rodeo that drew Knowles and his wife together. Mary Healy was on the Blue Mountain Community College rodeo team. They met in 1976 when a friend invited Knowles to a spaghetti feed the girls were

received some advice. “Give it a try—you never know what it might lead to,” Field told him.

Knowles called back and said he’d try. He ended up working with country legend Red Steagall, who was host that year.

“I enjoyed it,” he says. “My job was an analyst, so it was just talking about what I really liked doing anyways. I really liked it.”

It wasn’t too long after that that he got another call from Corfield. This time, his former coach told him,

Finals Rodeo.

“That was my big break,” says Knowles. “I’ve done it ever since.”

Knowles kept competing in rodeos part time until 1992, when he retired from the rough stock riding he loved. He had been a rodeo professional for almost 20 years—an average career length, he says, though admitting that it was a fairly long career for a rough stock rider.

Knowles also did a lot to promote rodeo closer to home. He and fellow saddle bronc rider David Bothum and their wives were all involved in starting the Hermiston pro rodeo. The Umatilla County Fair was struggling at the time, and Knowles and Bothum suggested starting a rodeo to coincide with the fair.

“But it has to be a professional rodeo,” Knowles says he told them.

They got the go-ahead, but when they asked about a budget for the rodeo, they were told, “There is no budget.”

“We put together a board and went to work,” says Knowles.

The Farm City Pro Rodeo was born in 1988 and has grown steadily over the last three decades. Knowles was chairman of the rodeo board from 1988-2004, during which time it was voted “small rodeo of the year” eight times.

Meanwhile, Knowles has been a familiar voice on the NFR telecast for more than 33 years, along with multiple other broadcasts. Throughout his career, hundreds of shows have been featured on 12 different television networks, including ESPN, Fox Sports and CBS Sports. He’s still announcing, most recently at the National Finals Rodeo last December.

He divides his time between that career and working the ranch on Little Butter Creek, where he still lives with Mary, while sons Blake and Brian and their families nearby.

“It’s worked out great to fit both in,” he says. “I’ve had the best of both worlds.”

Knowles’s many accomplishments have already earned him spots in the St. Paul Rodeo Hall of Fame in 2019 and the Pendleton Round-Up Hall of Fame in 2020. He and other inductees into the



**Knowles and Jeff Medders on a ESPN broadcast in the 1990s.** -Contributed photo

putting on. “It was at Mary’s house, and that’s how we met,” he says, “and she’s been crazy about me ever since.”

They were married in 1977. They went on to have two sons, Brian and Blake, and eventually settled down on the Healy ranch on Little Butter Creek, where they still live and work.

“She’s been along for the whole ride,” says Knowles of his wife. “It’s as much hers as mine.”

Both sons have spent their share of time in the rodeo arena, and Blake still rodeos as a PRCA steer wrestler.

Knowles continued his rodeo career on the professional circuit after college. He joined the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA) in 1974 and competed professionally in bareback, bull riding and saddle bronc riding through 1991.

In his time, he competed at all major PRCA and Cowboys Professional Rodeo Association (CPRA) events across the U.S. and Canada. He continued to rack up accomplishments, including 1987 NFR saddle bronc average champion, two-time Pendleton Round-Up saddle bronc champion and competing on the U.S. gold medal rodeo team in the 1988 Olympics in Calgary, Alberta.

A turning point in his career came in the mid-’80s, when Corfield called and told him the College National Finals Rodeo was looking for an analyst for its television production.

“I actually turned them down at the beginning,” Knowles says. “I had a couple decent broncs that I could win some money on.”

He says he was talking to friend Lewis Field behind the chutes, though, and

the PRCA and National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association were teaming up to put on rodeo judging seminars across the county, and Corfield thought Knowles would be a good fit.

Knowles agreed and ended up traveling around the U.S. with PRCA head judge Jack Hannum. He says they put on about 12 seminars a year with 30-50 participants each.

“We just really dug deep into the inside of each event,” Knowles says. “That really helped me, because it really helped



**Knowles riding a saddle bronc in the Cheyenne Frontier Days rodeo in Wyoming in 1984.** -Contributed/Gustafson Photo

me know how to present things.”

In 1989, he was approached by rodeo announcer and telecast producer John Baumgartner. Baumgartner was the producer of the Dodge National Circuit Finals Rodeo, held in Pocatello, ID that year.

“He asked me if I would want to travel to Pocatello and be the analyst during the saddle bronc riding of that event,” Knowles recalls. “I said yes. When I got there, he said, ‘Just be the analyst on every event.’”

After the event, Baumgartner asked Knowles if he’d like to be the analyst for the National

PRCA Hall of Fame will be honored at a ceremony July 15 in Colorado Spring, CO.

“That’s pretty humbling, holy cow. For a guy that does a lot of talking I don’t have a ton of words to say right now,” Knowles said when he was notified of the honor. “This is the last thing that I ever thought would happen.”

“It is quite an honor. It’s probably not the place that I feel like I should be. But it’s an honor to be thought of that way, it really is.”

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# Heppner coach, athletes honored

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**SFC Joseph Sullivan (far right) with Heppner athletes Kadie Henrichs (left) and Cameron Proudfoot (middle).** -Photo courtesy of the OSAA

Their impact extends far beyond the playing field,” stated an OSAA posting about the event. “Your contributions do not go unnoticed. We honor your commitment to fostering sportsmanship, leadership, and a sense of community.”

Heppner High School student-athletes Kadie Henrichs and Cameron Proudfoot both received Oregon Army Guard Most Valuable Teammate (MVT) awards for leading by example and unwavering team spirit.

“Their hard work, positive attitudes, willingness to

adapt, and ceaseless support of others exemplify everything that a true teammate stands for,” said an OSAA statement. “Join us as we celebrate the spirit of teamwork, camaraderie, and dedication that these young athletes bring to the field and their communities.”

Proudfoot competed in football, basketball and baseball in the last school year, while Henrichs was involved in volleyball, basketball and softball.

Every varsity coach in Oregon is invited to nominate an MVT from his or

her team every year. The MVTs are not only honored at their schools by Oregon Guard members but are also given the chance to apply for one of three \$1,000 college scholarships.

Oregon Army National Guard Recruiter, Sergeant First Class Joseph Sullivan, was on hand to present the awards to Grant, Henrichs and Proudfoot.

Learn more about the Oregon Army National Guard at <https://www.oregonarmyguard.com>.

# Oregon Senate passes bill easing estate tax for farming families

June 22, the Oregon Senate passed Senate Bill 498 A, a bill making Oregon’s estate tax more workable for multigenerational farms, fishing businesses and family forestlands. It allows up to \$15 million of farm, forest, and fishing property to be excluded from the value of estates that pay the estate tax.

“This is a major issue for Oregon’s natural resource families who fuel our economy,” said Senator Bill Hansell (R-Athens), the bill’s chief sponsor. “Cooperate farming organizations are ready to gobble up farmland, including multigenerational farms facing foreclosure due to an unpayable estate tax bill. SB 498 ensures that our

natural resource families get the relief they both need and deserve.”

There are 37,000 farms in Oregon averaging 423 acres in size. Of those, 96.7 percent are family owned.

“I applaud Senator Hansell’s work to reduce the burden of Oregon’s worst-in-the-nation estate tax on our farming, fishing, and forestry families. Oregon’s estate tax should not jeopardize generational operations nor prevent the ability to transfer family farms from generation to generation,” said Senate Republican Leader Tim Knopp (R-Bend).

Senate Bill 498 creates an exclusion from the estate tax for any interest in natural resource property

that is held by a decedent for at least one year prior to death and is transferred, at the time of death, to one or more family members of the decedent. It allows estates to claim an exemption for up to \$15 million of natural resource property value, and if claiming the exemption, they may not claim the existing Natural Resource Credit. It applies to the estates of decedents dying on or after July 1, 2023.

“SB 498 will help keep rural farms in the family by reducing, and in some cases eliminating, the estate tax,” said Rep. Greg Smith (R-Heppner). “This a win for the agriculture industry in Eastern Oregon.”

# Orem awarded AgWest scholarship



**Madison Orem**

Madison Orem of Ione was awarded a \$2,500 college scholarship from Ag-West Farm Credit, the company announced Friday. Orem, the daughter of Eric and Brandi Orem, plans on

attending the University of Idaho in the fall.

She was one of 25 recipients in Oregon who will each receive a \$2,500 college scholarship.

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