



Buck Beal  
Public Relations Director  
World Gay Rodeo Finals®  
Buck.PS@gmail.com  
Tel. or Text 760 333-5664  
www.igra-wgrf.com

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## World Gay Rodeo Finals® in Mesquite this Year

*October 25-28th, Mesquite, Texas*

The best of gay rodeo comes to Texas for the 32<sup>nd</sup> **World Gay Rodeo Finals®** this month at renowned Mesquite Arena in Mesquite, Texas (October 25-28<sup>th</sup>). The Finals, preeminent among the ten gay rodeos sanctioned this year by the International Gay Rodeo Association (a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization), will feature over one hundred of the top performing men and women contestants nationwide as they compete against their peers in eleven traditional rodeo events plus three light-hearted, yet fiercely competitive “camp events” the likes of which are only to be seen at the gay rodeo.

Throughout the year, men and women rival one another for prize money and the coveted title of All-Around Cowboy and All Around-Cowgirl at gay rodeos coast to coast. The winners of each event receive trophy buckles designed by the host rodeo association. At season's end, the contestants with the highest points in each event receive invitations to the World Gay Rodeo Finals® presented by IGRA.

At the World Gay Rodeo Finals® you'll see the very best of those cowboys and cowgirls in keen competition in familiar rodeo events such as Bull Riding, Ranch Saddle Bronc Riding, Steer Riding, and Chute Dogging. Speed events will include Barrel Racing, Pole Bending, and Flag Racing. Last, but never least, are the camp events: Steer Decorating, the Wild Drag Race, and Goat Dressing. These events, a distinguishing highlight of a gay rodeo, always are a scream and real crowd pleasers.

But it's more than fun & games... Tracing its roots to the first gay rodeo October 1976 in Reno, Nevada (a fundraising event for Muscular Dystrophy), the World Gay Rodeo Finals® continues a forty-two year tradition of philanthropy. Monies raised this year by the Finals 2018 IGRA Royalty Team are destined to **Wish for Wings**, a wish-granting agency for Texas children fighting life-threatening conditions; to **4 Paws 4 Patriots**, a group matching trained shelter dogs to American veterans needing service dogs; to the **Trevor Project**, an organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to LGBTQ youth aged 13-24 nationally; and to the **Joyful Heart Foundation**, furnishing healing, education, and advocacy through an integrated program portfolio. IGRA and the Finals also have a special “Going Pink for Rodeo” campaign for Breast Cancer Awareness this month. Proceeds from this initiative are slated for the **Moncrief Center** in Ft. Worth, which community services include, among others, mammograms for the uninsured.

The Finals also will display historic Segment #93 of the original mile-long Sea-to-Sea rainbow flag during Finals weekend. Segment #93 is revered by many in the LGBTQ community as the “sacred cloth.” It's been a feature of rallies and demonstrations in the Marriage Equality movement and other

gay equality and celebratory events globally from the Supreme Court to Stockholm, and the White House to Vancouver and Sydney.

The road from Reno 1976 to Texas 2018, at times marred by ignorance, bigotry, and occasional violence, has become more like the fabled yellow brick road now, leading to optimism, acceptance, diversity, and charity. You, too, can follow that road to the World Gay Rodeo Finals® in Mesquite October 25-28<sup>th</sup> - the culminating event in the world of gay rodeo athletics and sure to please. Come to Texas. See the gay rodeo at it's biggest and most spectacular.