

Rodeo Lifestyle Keeps Popular Couple All-Around Busy Cowboy And Cowgirl

By Frank J. Buchman

“The sport of rodeo is the passionate lifestyle for this pair.”

Guy and Kelly Forell are two of the busiest most popular cowboys and cowgirls in the country.

From their 11-acre-ranchette at Victoria in Ellis County, the well-known couple participates in diverse Western action throughout the Midwest.

Individually or combined, it's a long list recognizing their diversified involvement with many different aspects of rodeo and horse events.

Start with Guy, he's a champion bull rider, bullfighter, rodeo announcer, professional rodeo judge, college rodeo team coach, and more.

Certified Public Accountant (CPA), Kelly is a rodeo queen, champion barrel racer, trainer, rodeo sound technician, horseshow leader, and more.

Married 31 years always involved with rodeo, they're parents of three grown children, grandparents of two, Western movie stars, and more.

“We're busy but it's a great life, exciting, relaxing, challenging all wrapped up together working with cowboys, cowgirls, and horses.”

Kelly's enthusiasm beams for everything horses as she and Guy take time to visit briefly while planning rodeo team workouts.

“My dad was a rodeo cowboy champion bulldogger as I was growing up on a ranch near Phillipsburg,” Guy said. “He was an all-around horseman actually serving as a judge for Kansas Western Horseman's Association (KWH) shows.

“We raised and ran racehorses that I helped train and race,” Guy continued. “I got so I could ride about anything Dad put me on.”

That youthful experience set him up for his rodeo career as a bareback bronc and bucking bull rider. “I competed in amateur rodeos and earned rodeo scholarships to attend college,” Guy said.

Specializing in bull riding, he rode for teams at Colby Community College and Northwestern Oklahoma State University (NWOSU) in Alva.

“I had a good college rodeo career and got my Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA) card my sophomore year,” Guy said. “My first professional rodeo was a win in bull riding at Colby.”

With dual degrees in agriculture and business administration, Guy completed a master's degree in business education. “I did teach some undergraduate NWOSU business administration classes, too,” he said.

Competing in PRCA, Guy mostly rode in the Prairie Circuit and Mountain States Circuit. “I did compete outside the circuits some too, Denver, Cheyenne, Fort Smith,

and others,” he noted. “I also got called upon to serve as a bull fighter at some rodeos.”

Highest marked bull ride of his career was 89-points at a jackpot event in Colorado. Admitting bulls were “different” in those days, Guy had a high percentage of qualified bull rides. “I drew right and covered more than 60 percent of the bulls,” he tallied.

Competing at the 1993 Mountain States Circuit Finals was the last time Guy rode out the bucking chute.

Coaching first the rodeo team at Colby, Guy moved on to coach at NWOSU. “I was also head of small business development there and in the banking business,” he said.

With his abilities and vast knowledge of the rodeo sport, Guy acquired his PRCA judge’s card. Then he was called upon to announce rodeos as well working from an announcer’s booth.

“I keep pretty busy now every summer between judging and announcing,” he said. “Between both professions I work about 14 rodeos a year throughout the Midwest.”

Also, a cowboy preacher, Guy provides church services at a number of rodeos and other horse events.

When the rodeo team coach position became available at Fort Hays State University, Guy had the experience for the job. “I’ve been at Hays a year now,” he said. “One man isn’t capable of being proficient in every event, so I have assistant coaches and clinicians to help.

“I’m actually more or less director of operations, coordinator of the team,” he added.

With owned and leased stock for every event, there are daily rodeo team practices.

“Of course, we want a winning team, so we must recruit cowboys and cowgirls who have rodeo success,” Guy said. “With college rodeo as tough as it is today, we can’t train a winning contestant in such a short time. They must have proven rodeo experience that we can build on when they come here.”

Presently there are 29 Fort Hays students who can represent the team at National Intercollegiate Rodeo Associations events in the Central Plains Region. “About half of those students are on rodeo scholarship which helps with their college expenses,” Guy said. “Our scholarship program is a major incentive to recruit some of the best college rodeo competitors to Hays.”

Kelly Freitag grew up just a few miles from where the couple live today. “My brother and I began our horseshow careers on half-brother geldings Sonny and Red

competing in KWHAs shows,” Kelly said. “I’ve been riding in horse activities all my life and have enjoyed every minute of it.”

While Kelly’s dad owned and operated a service station, he had a love of horses. “Dad stumbled into some quality racehorse breeding producing racetrack winners,” Kelly said.

Her stay-at-home mother was credited for taking the children to horseshows. “Two younger sisters were added to our team several years later,” Kelly related.

The family collected more than 2,000 trophies competing in horse shows every weekend throughout the summers in western Kansas. “The trophies were destroyed when fire claimed my parents’ home,” Kelly noted.

It was while on the rodeo team at Colby Community College that Kelly became acquainted with Guy. “I was busy with college and competing at rodeos,” Kelly said. “So, we actually dated for about six years before we were married,”

“Busy” isn’t ample definition for her college days as Kelly went to Colby two years. “I transferred to Kansas State University, Manhattan, went there two-and-a-half years, and graduated with an animal science degree,” she said.

Barrel racing on the K-State Rodeo Team, Kelly was National Miss College Rodeo before being crowned 1990 Miss Rodeo Kansas. “It was a great reign,” she said. “I had so much fun promoting the sport of rodeo and getting to meet so many people.”

Representing the state of Kansas, Kelly was a top-five finalist at the Miss Rodeo America pageant during the National Finals Rodeo in Las Vegas.

Still riding and competing some, Kelly was kept busy raising their three children. “They were involved in horse showing just like I was and also participated in junior rodeos,” she said. “Our daughter was the 2014 National Little Britches Rodeo barrel racing champion.”

With children grown, Kelly returned to personal full effort in the arena. “I again compete in KWHAs shows in every event,” she said. “I was highpoint rider in my division at the KWHAs state show in Lyons.”

She serves as the interim KWHAs president and did much of the footwork for that competition which Guy served as announcer.

“I have a great mare called Emmy that is outstanding barrel racing in small arenas,” Kelly said. “I have been a semi-finals qualifier for The American Rodeo, and have won several rodeos, but mostly go to area jackpot events.

“We are headed to Fort Worth in February,” Kelly continued. “We hope to make the final four to have a shot for a ‘million’ at The American Rodeo 2023.”

A former National O-Mok-See patterned horse racing champion, Kelly also won titles this year at the Kansas O-Mok-See.

Handling only a few CPA clients, Kelly keeps four horses in a training regime. “We have a couple futurity colts that look really promising,” she said.

Sound is an important part of modern-day rodeo and Kelly oversees music for many of the rodeos that Guy announces. “It’s a lot of fun but challenging sometimes getting the music to match the arena action,” she admitted.

Both Guy and Kelly have had acting parts in DVD (digital video) movies produced by an Oklahoma firm.

“That has really been fun, too,” Kelly said. “We’ve worked with Buck Taylor and other known actors. I had the opportunity to be a stunt double for an actress in a runaway horse scene.”

Claiming “looking toward retirement,” the couple must admit that’s a misnomer.

“I have sold my CPA business,” Kelly said. “But I’m excited to be working with more barrel prospects. We have two grandchildren and one on the way that I want to get started riding and showing too.”

Guy still enjoys announcing and judging rodeos, along with his coaching position.

“So, he’ll continue that but maybe work fewer rodeos,” Kelly said. “We have talked about raising some barrel horses. Still, Guy is so good at selecting prospects, that it’s generally more profitable to buy futurity colts then raise them.”

When it comes time to rodeo or for any Western horse activity, Guy and Kelly Forell will most likely be involved.



Guy Forell portrays Harley and Kelly Forell is Saige in Skeleton Creek Productions’ DVD (digital video) movie “Canyon Trail.” Guy just began shooting their new movie: “The Golden Cross.”

Kelly Forell rode Cowboys Ginnin 851, better recognized as Emmy, to be a 2017 American Rodeo Semi-Finals Qualifier in Ardmore, Oklahoma.





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Commonly recognized as a cowgirl and cowboy, Kelly and Guy Forell, Victoria, are a stylish couple dressed up in their civies.

