

Getting To Know....

Kendra Dickson

Kendra gives all the glory to God. She is a generous and a very giving person. We caught up with Kendra Dickson and she was eager to share her thoughts and experiences in many areas of her life with us. We hope you enjoy learning about Kendra as much as we did.....



I grew up on a large working ranch in east Texas and now I live in north Texas. My dad was an all-around cowboy and rodeoed a lot back in the day. He always raised cattle and trained horses. For a while he judged PRCA rodeos until work at the ranch and raising a family took over. My mom was country long before country was cool, she grew up in the River Oaks area of Houston and was a self-proclaimed cowgirl from the get go. She used to tie a hay string on her bicycle handle bars and pretend they were reins. She was a rodeo queen and loved to run barrels. Both of my parents have been influential in my rodeo career.

I was in the saddle before I could walk or talk. Always a daddy's girl, I was up with him before dawn and headed to the ranch to work. We had an old Chevy truck we called the "honey bun" wagon and we stopped every morning at the Coffee Kup cafe after feeding horses and cows.

I've had several important "first" memorable horses in my lifetime. The first pony I had was a little blue roan named Shrinky Dink. The first horse I ever fell off of was a big brood mare named Pondy (I'll never forget that day!). The first horse registered in my name was Ruffles N Diamonds. She was an outlaw filly we raised on the ranch and could buck like no other...one day she traded her pitchfork in for a crown and became the perfect ranch horse for me. I could do anything on that mare, even taught her to pull a cart. Ironically the first race horse my dad ever purchased ended up becoming my first barrel horse. His name was Blew B Rocket. And, my first high school rodeo horse (the one who taught me how to be a competitor) was a little flea-bitten, mean-as-sin, 14 hand mare named Jessie.

The first horse I ever won pro money on was the big Marthas Six Moons gelding, Talladega. He really expanded my skills as a trainer and stretched me way out of my comfort zone. I believe the horse I am most well known for riding is Dover. He is the red roan Hancock and Azure Te gelding I started on barrels when he was nine. He's now fifteen years old and going strong. I've won the most pro rodeos on Dover and would love the chance to run him at the Thomas and Mack.



Three things people may not know about me... I love yoga and have coined the phrase "Rodeoga" as it applies to my life. Rodeoga helps me every day; it strengthens my core and improves my balance in the saddle. I am a Speech Language Pathologist and practiced four years in the public school system before riding horses full time. And, I'm also a cake decorator. If I didn't train horses, I could easily see myself owning a signature KD cakery in the DFW metroplex.

I met my husband, Chad, at a Pam Tillis concert in Nacogdoches, Texas. He asked me to dance and swept me off my feet. We had a typical redneck romance complete with hog hunting, fishing, camp fires and four-wheelers. He took a job in Argyle, Texas, in 1997 and we've been in North Texas ever since. We recently celebrated our 16th wedding anniversary. We have one daughter, Kaiden. She is a very talented rider and won the 2012 AjPHA Novice Barrel Racing World title, but her passion is not called to be in a barn... she much prefers to be on stage. She loves art, drama, gymnastics and theater. Kaiden travels with me most in the summer and is a great source of encouragement for me.

I also feel like "Mom" to many other girls. Since I train and teach, there are many long-time students that have become our extended family over the years. Our place is always bubbling with activity and I love it! The girls who travel with me most are my assistants, CJ Lembke (she got her permit this year and rides the buckskin gelding "Ducati"), Hope Schuster and Sarah Buchanan. My best friend, Chrystal Hall, helps me teach clinics, keep tabs on our non-profit group and manages the rodeo schedule. Misti Ray is our event secretary and coordinates special events, clinics and barrel races.

“Pedigrees don’t make good horses. Good horses make pedigrees popular.”

My dad is by far my favorite cowboy of all time. Among many things, he taught me how to pay attention to the small details of horsemanship and not judge a horse based on age, pedigree or someone else's opinion of the animal. He always said, "Pedigrees don't make good horses. Good horses make pedigrees popular." He also taught me how to manage a training facility and to be resourceful with

what you've got... whether it be a project horse or a proven winner; an old truck with an outdated trailer or a brand new rig; whether a fancy arena or a plowed up field...Dad is a genius at making the most out of every day and every situation. He taught me never to panic and keep a cool head on horseback; and, how to appreciate each horse as an individual. I also highly respect trainers, Allen Rapert and Punk Carter. Both have been strong influences in my life and recent training. They each have spent many years and countless hours riding horses and training champions. I wish every horse person in the world could spend at least one day with these three men, and glean from their expertise with horses.

I like quick, catty and sharp turners. When I start a horse on barrels, I never have a deadline in mind. I



Chad & Kendra

treat each horse as an individual and increase my expectations accordingly. I'm not a big fan of designer label or popular name brand barrel horses. It's been my experience that most tend to be heavily race-bred and that's just not conducive to my training style. I prefer a quiet, low maintenance, well-

mannered horse, with a lot of whoa and one that can handle on a loose rein. The better broke a horse is before he comes to my place, the faster I can get him going on barrels and expect results.

A day in the life of Kendra Dickson: Right now, it's wicked hot in Texas so we start at 6:30 am. I was gone rodeoing for the month of July and my babies

got a much deserved break. I never worry when life events happen and for whatever reason I have to turn horses out for a while. Since my training style is simple, straight forward and direct, I always trust we can go back to work like we haven't missed a day. I don't spend a lot of time drilling and tuning. I teach a horse from day one how to handle the ground and think for themselves, without relying too much on my hands for direction. I watch for small increments of improvement and call it good. And, I don't waste time with a lot of fluff that I was taught were the "must do's" of barrel training. Turns out if you listen to your horse more than people, you'll get where you want to go a lot faster.

Currently, I ride five to seven horses per day while Dover spends a lot of his time at Selway, the equine conditioning facility located in Whitesboro, Texas.



Ft. Worth, TX

They do a great job exercising Dover on the underwater treadmill and treat his legs in the cold salt water therapy tub. When I leave Dover there, I feel like I'm leaving my child at pre-school with the best and most caring teachers in the world!

I currently own all of the horses in my barn. I do occasionally partner on some training horses when the opportunities arise.

Advice on training a winner: Be realistic and consistent. We all want our first horse (or first ten horses for that matter) to be a world champion. Realize that you must also train yourself and the cold hard truth is that it takes TIME. Before blaming a horse for anything, take a good long look in a mirror and scan your own body for possible mistakes. Be patient and persistent. Pray. And have faith that God hears your



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prayers and will answer them according to His best judgment. It has been my experience that God always has a better plan than I do. So, be faithful and enjoy the journey.

As far as equipment, I am close to releasing my own line of saddles. I've invested several years (and, unfortunately, several thousand dollars) into designing the right saddle to fit my needs. I will not put anything out there for sale that I don't absolutely approve and love. Over the years I have mostly used felt saddle pads. Lately I'm riding in one with fleece lining that I like. When my old saddle was making my horse sore, I cut thick yoga mats and glued them underneath for extra shock absorption.

My favorite bit is a medium lifter with a dog bone. In my opinion, it's the best and most versatile bit in the world--I can ride any age horse with any kind of mouth and get along with this bit. I always warm up in split reins and run in one short rein. My warm ups are calm, cool and collected. I walk a lot, long trot, make sure the breaks are working and that Dover is comfortable before I enter the alley. I am a stickler



San Antonio, TX

Continued.....

about walking up the alley and starting near the gate.

My favorite truck... happens to be the new Ford. This summer, my truck needed a new EGR valve and I rented a Ford from Enterprise to make it to Spanish Fork, Utah. That truck was plain Jane and ugly... but it was a runnin' fool and now I want one! :) I've owned and pulled many different types of trailers and still my favorite is a Cherokee. They've cornered the market in my opinion for being logical and user-friendly. I also love that the Cherokee's pull so easy...they are clean, quiet, light and straight. They're not the fanciest or the most expensive... they're just plain smart.

I feed whole oats and simple sweet feed or a dry mix with no molasses. I despise performance based feed products... they make a horse hot and I don't need the extra run in my program, I need my horses' full attention and for him to be able to think clearly to execute a pattern with precision. A horse can't do that if they have too much energy pulsing through their system from amped up feeds or supplements.

Supplements... I feed electrolytes every day, along with a selenium product. At times, I use Ranitidine in place of ulcer guard. It's cheaper and works immediately. I only use ulcer guard after having a horse scoped and ulcers confirmed. Dover gets joint supplements and coconut oil. For an extra boost I keep him on alfalfa, while my other horses eat coastal.

I've had a lot of issues keeping Dover sound and happy in shoes. Dr. Justin High at Reata Equine Hospital and Podiatry Center in Weatherford, Texas, and Master Farrier, Jake Whitman, have done wonders with Dover this year! I am quick to praise them for our 2013 success.

“Rodeo For A Reason”

At this point in my career, I am most focused on pro rodeo and qualifying for the National Finals Rodeo. My best friends and I have been volunteering for the past seven years and teaching free barrel clinics as our outreach ministry. We call ourselves Team Gold Buckle and our mission is to “Rodeo For A Reason”. Our biggest goal is called "10.10.10" and that stands for ten rounds, ten saddles, tenfold. I'd like to give away a saddle in each round of competition and raise money for a different ministry or charity each night at the NFR.

Favorite arenas... Dover loves indoor coliseums but will run outdoors, just as well. I appreciate arenas with good footing, a safe place to warm up and a closed gate to stop my horse.

REDEMPTION AT GUYMON, OK

Dover & Kendra return to clock the exact same 17.27 as last year to win the first round again in Guymon, OK 2013

Most recent events we did well at - This summer we tied for 2nd in Sheridan, Wyoming; and tied for 2nd again in Round Two in Dodge City. Summer 2013 was a great adventure! The Fox family of Little Rock graciously loaned us the use of a large trailer with 17' living quarters and the use of their horse "Loki" as back up. The girls and I had a blast and saw some really beautiful country. During down time, we were blessed to stay at the Lembke residence in Denver, Colorado. It was so nice to have luxury living on the road and a home away from home when we had time to rest. My most memorable moments were the Native American horse racing in Sheridan, the roaring crowd in St. Paul, the overkill of fireworks in Molalla, the friendly committee at Spanish Fork, the nice folks at



Clinic in Ada, Oklahoma

Mountianaire Vet Clinic in Rock Springs, WY and staying at the Siena Resort in Reno (when we left, the hotel manager came down to hug our necks and wish us safe travels.) I am also extremely thankful for angels that must have accompanied us at 3 am in the morning on the drive from Utah to Wyoming. I had apparently blown a trailer tire on I-80 and shredded the tread. The next morning, I found tar splattered all over the side of the trailer, a busted fender and a bald tire with wire sticking out...to my shock and surprise...the tire still had air in it!

Integral players for Team Dover

I would like to thank all the people who go above and beyond to help me stay on the road and to those who ensure my horse's health and peak performance:

My husband, Dr. Chad Dickson, DVM
Chrystal Hall, Office Manager and BFF
Team Gold Buckle, all members nation-wide and Canada
Reata Equinel Hospital, Dr. Justin High, DVM
Jake Whitman, Farrier
Equine Express, N.A. Inc., Owner, Joe McGee
The 70 Ranch, Bob Lembke and Family
Davis Farms, Owner, Lenzy Meredith
The Fox Family and Hannah Thomas
Selway Equine Therapy Center
Brandenburg Equine Therapy - Equine Sport
Therapist, Troy Brandenburg
Doubeltree Equine Therapy - Equine Chiropractor,
Doug Smith
Cowgirl Tuff Co

Background photo:
Savannah Senkel (center) winning the
reserve Championship For Christ award

Most of all, I give credit, glory and thanks to God, our Father. Through His Son, Jesus Christ, there is salvation. I can honestly say that knowing Christ has changed my life. I know that I am saved, I know that I am forgiven and I am so thankful that I don't have to live up to the perfect standards the world tries to achieve. He doesn't call the qualified... He qualifies the called! I encourage every one to call upon The Lord and find your own unique way to Rodeo For A Reason. (Hebrews 10:24).

Kendra

To find out more about free clinics or
private coaching and to follow
Team Gold Buckle
please visit:

www.goldbucklebarrelhorses.com

or www.kendradickson.com

