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**PBR Announces 2023 Class of Heroes and Legends Inductees to be Honored Sept. 9 at National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City**

*Oklahoma Freedom Assistant Coach and 2009 PBR World Champion Kody Lostroh to Receive Ring of Honor, while Sooner State bovine and three-time World Champion SweetPro's Bruiser to receive Brand of Honor*

*Other inductees include rodeo legend Jim Shoulders, executive Bob Funk Sr. and Maria Crimber*

OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla. (July 27, 2023) – The PBR (Professional Bull Riders) today announced the 2023 class of Heroes and Legends inductees, marking the first group of individuals who have had an extraordinary impact on Western sports to be inducted into the organization's soon-to-be-launched Hall of Fame at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City.

The 2023 Heroes and Legends Ceremony, recognized over the years as one of the preeminent Western sports award ceremonies, will be held on Sat., Sept. 9, prior to the second day of the Oklahoma Freedom's three-day homestand, Freedom Fest schedule for Sept. 8-10 at nearby Paycom Center. The Freedom are one of eight founding teams for the groundbreaking PBR Teams league, transforming the sport of bull riding from an individual sport into team competition.

Freedom Assistant Coach and 2009 PBR World Champion **Kody Lostroh** will receive the coveted PBR Ring of Honor, regarded as the highest honor a professional bull rider can receive. The Ring of Honor is presented to individuals who have made a significant and lasting contribution to the sport of bull riding, based on the core beliefs of the organization, including authenticity, toughness, respect, teamwork, and professionalism.

Ten-time PBR World Finals Qualifier Lostroh reached the pinnacle of the sport in 2009 when he was crowned World Champion following a feverish battle with J.B. Mauney. Following the 2014 season, Lostroh retired from the sport, having won 10 premier series events, while recording 51 90-point rides across all levels of competition. Earning more than \$3.2 million during his competitive career, Lostroh currently ranks No. 12 in all-time money earned by all competitors within the PBR.

After stepping away from the PBR in 2014, the following year Lostroh was diagnosed with a tumor around his carotid artery. While Lostroh made a full recovery and briefly returned to

competition, he officially retired in March 2018 and has since resided in Colorado with his wife and children. In 2022, Lostroh was tapped to join the Oklahoma Freedom's coaching staff alongside Cord McCoy and helped lead the team to a 16-12 record during the regular season, before finishing fourth at the inaugural PBR Teams Championship.

The prestigious Brand of Honor will be presented to three-time World Champion Bull **SweetPro's Bruiser**. The PBR Brand of Honor, created in 2011, is the highest honor a bovine animal athlete can receive. The honor is based on the animal athlete's display of consistent championship caliber performances and career statistical records.

The famed animal athlete from Oklahoman H.D. Page and D&H Cattle Co. has his name firmly etched in the PBR record books. He is one of three bulls in PBR history who have won three world titles (2016-18), alongside Little Yellow Jacket and Bushwacker.

Bruiser, the 2015 ABBI Classic Champion and 2017 PRCA Bull of the Year, and Bodacious are the only two bulls in history to win World Championships in both the PBR and PRCA. He concluded his career with a 60-17 record on the premier series and 104-29 overall, with 25 or those rides for 90 points or more. Bruiser passed away in May 2022 at the age of 11 was known to be a lovable pet with a boisterous personality in the back pen and a staunch, tough highly athletic competitor when it was time to buck.

Oklahoma-based, multi-hyphenate businessman **Bob Funk Sr.** will be honored with the Jim Shoulders Lifetime Achievement Award, recognizing those who throughout their life and professional career have significantly contributed to the advancement of the sport of bull riding and rodeo.

In 1983, Funk founded Express Employment Professionals, headquartered in Oklahoma City, which has since grown into a multi-billion-dollar company, with more than 780 franchises that employ upwards of 500,000 people globally. Among numerous other positions he has held, Funk has also been chairman of the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber, the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, and the Oklahoma Youth Expo. He has been named Most Admired CEO by the *Journal Record* newspaper, Man of the Year by *Impact OKC Magazine*, and he's been inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame, the International Franchise Association Hall of Fame and the Sales and Marketing Executives International Hall of Fame.

With a lifelong passion for the Western lifestyle, rooted in his humble upbringing at his family's Washington-state farm, Funk launched additional businesses including Express Sports, now known as Prodigal LLC, which along with serving as a representation agency for dozens of bull riders, helped grow various premier series PBR events in Oklahoma.

Leading a representation business, Funk assisted with the growth of careers for athletes including World Champions Chris Shivers, Ednei Caminhas, Jess Lockwood, and others. At the event level, Funk was key in establishing both Oklahoma City and Tulsa as key events for more than a decade on the elite PBR Unleash The Beast.

Rodeo legend **Jim Shoulders** will be posthumously honored with the Ty Murray Top Hand Award. Created in 2018, this honor is given annually to individuals who through their own efforts have made significant and lasting contributions to enhance the sport of rodeo.

Shoulders was a giant in and out of the arena, winning 16 world titles and becoming a household name in the process.

A city kid with no livestock background, Shoulders' career began in 1942 at the young age of 14, when he witnessed and entered his first rodeo. In his first outing, Shoulders won the bull riding competition in Oilton, Oklahoma, along with \$18.

Shoulders continued his professional career as the winningest cowboy of all time in the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA) where he won 16 world championships. This included the world all-around rodeo cowboy championship five times (1949, 1956-1959), world champion bareback rider title four times (1950, 1956-1958) and world champion bull rider title seven times (1951, 1954-1959). Injuries put an end to his rodeo career in 1970, and he retired to his ranch in Oklahoma with his wife Sharon where together they raised four children.

While Shoulders hung up his spurs, he remained connected to the industry as a stock contractor, while also running a rodeo school. Shoulders quickly became a celebrity outside of the Western world while doing promotional work for brands like Wrangler, who had signed him in 1948, and Justin Boots, in addition to appearing on television for Miller Lite beer alongside baseball legend Billy Martin.

He was inducted into the Pro Rodeo Hall of Fame in 1979 and today is the only cowboy ever to be inducted into the Madison Square Garden Hall of Fame. Shoulders was also an avid supporter of the PBR over the years, lending his knowledge and experience to the organization. In 2007, Shoulders passed away at the age of 79. His 58-year partnership with Wrangler was the longest sports licensing endorsement in the history of sports, and his legacy is honored with the aforementioned Jim Shoulders Lifetime Achievement Award.

**Maria Crimber** will be honored with the Sharon Shoulders Award. Created in 2010, the Sharon Shoulders Award recognizes the great women of professional bull riding and Western sports, whose work, partnership, and faith have been as integral to the sport as the athletes themselves.

Crimber is the wife of 10-time World Finals qualifier turned Arizona Ridge Riders' Co-Coach Paulo Crimber. After meeting Paulo in 2001 while he was injured and recovering in Brazil, Crimber left everything she knew behind in Brazil to accompany Paulo to the United States and support his dream of becoming one of the world's best riders.

The Crimbers settled in Decatur, Texas, in 2004, soon welcoming their children John and Helena.

Their family, however, is larger than that, having welcomed dozens of Brazilian bull riders into their home rent-free while they begin to build roots stateside. In addition to giving them a safe place to settle, the Crimbers help their countrymen with travel and rodeo entry fees, translating while teaching them English and providing rides to surgery and rehab, among other deeds.

In July 2023, Maria and Paulo fully recognized their dreams, officially becoming American citizens.

Heroes and Legends will begin with a catered lunch at 12 p.m. CT on Saturday, Sept. 9 at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, followed by the award presentation at 1 p.m. CT. Tables and tickets for the 2023 PBR Heroes and Legends Ceremony are on-sale now and can be purchased at [Ticketmaster.com](https://www.ticketmaster.com).

The action for Freedom Fest at Paycom Center begins at 7:45 p.m. CT on Friday, September 8, 6:45 p.m. CT on Saturday, September 9, and 1:45 p.m. CT on Sunday, September 10.

Tickets for the event are on sale now, and start at \$20, taxes and fees not included. They can be purchased online at [Ticketmaster.com](https://www.ticketmaster.com) and [PBR.com](https://www.pbr.com), at the Paycom Center Box Office, or by calling PBR customer service at 1-800-732-1727. Three-day ticket packages are available, offering fans a 15% discount on select price levels.

Fans can also purchase a combination package including tickets to both Freedom Fest and a table for the Heroes and Legends ceremony at [Ticketmaster.com](https://www.ticketmaster.com).

For more information about Heroes and Legends visit <https://pbr.com/heroes-legends>.

#### **About PBR (Professional Bull Riders):**

PBR is the world's premier bull riding organization. More than 800 bull riders compete in more than 200 events annually across the televised PBR Unleash The Beast tour (UTB), which features the top bull riders in the world; the PBR Pendleton Whisky Velocity Tour (PWVT); the PBR Touring Pro Division (TPD); and the PBR's international circuits in Australia, Brazil, Canada and Mexico. In 2022, PBR launched the PBR Team Series—eight teams of the world's best bull riders competing for a new championship—as well as the PBR Challenger Series with more than 60 annual events nationwide. The organization's digital assets include PBR RidePass on Pluto TV, which is home to Western sports. PBR is a subsidiary of Endeavor, a global sports and entertainment company. For more information, visit [PBR.com](https://www.pbr.com), or follow on Facebook at [Facebook.com/PBR](https://www.facebook.com/PBR), Twitter at [Twitter.com/PBR](https://twitter.com/PBR), and YouTube at [YouTube.com/PBR](https://www.youtube.com/PBR).

#### **About the Oklahoma Freedom:**

The Oklahoma Freedom are based at Paycom Center in Oklahoma City, joining team tenants including the NBA's Oklahoma City Thunder, and their G League affiliate Oklahoma City Blue, where the team will hold its second Freedom Fest homestand on September 8-10, 2023, the sixth event of the 10-event 2023 PBR Teams regular season. The Freedom are coached by Oklahoma native Cord McCoy, a former bull rider and four-time qualifier for PBR World Finals, and 2009 PBR World Champion Kody Lostroh

#### **About The National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum:**

The National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City is America's premier institution of Western history, art and culture. Founded in 1955, the Museum collects, preserves and exhibits an internationally renowned collection of Western art and artifacts while sponsoring dynamic educational programs to stimulate interest in the enduring legacy of the American West. The Museum is located only six miles northeast of downtown Oklahoma City at 1700 Northeast 63rd Street. For more information, visit [nationalcowboymuseum.org](https://www.nationalcowboymuseum.org).

