

By Gloria McAfee Carver
Contributing Writer

LET 'EM BUCK — The Freckles Brown Memorial Bull Riding, ninth annual event, is upcoming at the Todd Whatley/Lige Hammock Covered Arena in Hugo, Okla., Saturday, Oct. 13. The CBR event honors one of several rodeo legends from Kiamichi Country, in southeast Oklahoma.

Freckles Brown's rodeo career spanned from 1937 to 1974. The slim, soft-spoken man, from Soper, Okla., was tough as cowboys come, and shone in many PRCA rodeo events, including: saddle bronc, bareback bronc, team roping, bull dogging and bull riding.

The famous ride that made him legendary, however, was in 1967, when he brought the rodeo crowd to their feet. Freckles made the eight seconds on a rank, "unrideable" bull named Tornado.

The bull, owned by Jim Shoulders, had thrown 200 riders during a 14-year span before Freckles Brown wrapped his rosined bull rope around the giant. Country singer, Red Steagall, memorialized the ride in his song, "Freckles Brown."

Brown retired to his ranch in Soper. He was a friend and mentor to Lane Frost. The two championship bull riders are buried next to each other in Mount Olivet Cemetery in Hugo, Okla. Grandson of Freckles Brown, John Harrison, with his wife, Carla, of Soper, produce the annual memorial ride, with the help of his parents Wiley and Donna Brown Harrison and many rodeo friends.

The young Harrison family have two children: Addy, 4, and Caz, 2. John, who has a degree in Ag-business, and is a certified equine massage therapist, is renowned in the PRCA rodeo circuits for his comedy horseback trick riding, trick roping, and his "walking talking" comedy barrel man performances in the bucking bull arena.

"I rode in some mutton busting and on calves when I was 6, but what made a lasting impact on me was when I saw my first trick riders at a rodeo. I knew right then, trick riding was for me," Harrison said.

His spontaneous, comical remarks come natural. "Carla, who is a professional auctioneer, is the backbone of my arena acts, she keeps everything organized and gets the horses ready behind the scenes."

The exciting family entertainment event this year will also feature in the arena, famed rodeo men such as J.W. Harris, B.J. Schumacher and Allan Dessel, and many other famous rodeo cowboys.