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Contact: Johna Cravens (580) 235-2664

Photo cutlines:

## **Hillman Wins \$5,000 Jerry Ann Taylor Award at World's Original Indoor Rodeo®**

by Johna Cravens  
for the Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo

FORT WORTH, Texas (Feb. 9, 2018) The judges for the annual Jerry Ann Taylor Best-Dressed Cowgirl Award at the Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo had a tough decision to make as several of the top 12 barrel racers expended extra effort in their arena presentation.

The award includes a \$5,000 cash prize along with permanent recognition on a plaque at the National Cowgirl Hall of Fame which co-sponsors the award with the Women's Professional Rodeo Association.

Stevi Hillman from Weatherford, Texas, a three-time National Finals Rodeo (NFR) qualifier, was named the winner. Hillman, who earned a degree in radiology from Weatherford College and has worked as an x-ray technician, came into the finals in fifth place. She was riding Guys R A Mystery, a palomino that she calls Sherlock.

Kendra Dickson, a two-time winner of the award from Aubrey, Texas, who has helped four other winners with their finals' outfits reached out to Hillman early last week about helping her. Dickson and her TruColors custom clothing line offered to provide an outfit for Simpson.

"I'm glad Kendra called me," Hillman said. "I'm normally kind of low-key," she said, "but it was for a good cause, so I decided why not. But I didn't want an outfit that was crazy, over-the-top."

Hillman said, "I knew they gave the award at Fort Worth every year, but I didn't know a lot about it. Kendra filled me in on the background. That's a really cool award."

Hillman and Dickson got together on Friday to plan her outfit.

“We both were up in the slack at Belton on Friday morning, so I parked about three trailers from her.” Dickson said. I had several outfits for her to look at, but we both decided the red would really pop on her palomino horse.”

“She handed me her jeans and shirt and I went to work,” Dickson said. She had taken her sewing machine with her and spent much of the day at Belton in her trailer working on the outfit.

“It was snowing and sleeting, and I spent some of the time in the back of the trailer with a manger door that would not close, using butcher paper and spray adhesive,” Dickson said. “If people only knew what goes on behind the scenes,” she added with a laugh.

The two cowgirls agreed to share the prize money if Hillman won the award, with Dickson’s share going to her Rodeo For A Reason charity that raises money for childhood cancer. Hillman will donate to Rockin’ W Rodeo Ministry, whose founders Ted and Linda Weise provide food and fellowship at rodeos across the country through their Cowboy Bistro.

Hillman said she had fun and while she’ll likely donate the breast collar and horse boots to a good cause, she plans to keep the outfit.

“When I make the NFR again, I’ll wear the red on Canada night,” she said, a nod to her friend from Canada who owns Sherlock.

Dickson also helped two other finalists – Dona Kay Rule of Minco, Oklahoma, and Tiany Schuster of Krum, Texas – with their outfits.

“I was very happy that more women participated this year,” Dickson said. “I strongly believe this is not only an opportunity to pay tribute to Jerry Ann Taylor who did so much for all of us, but a chance to add to the audience’s enjoyment.”

The Jerry Ann Taylor Award is only given at the National Finals Rodeo and at the finals of the World’s Original Indoor Rodeo in Fort Worth. Taylor, a 1986 National Cowgirl Hall of Fame honoree, was a flamboyant trick rider and roper who was known for her sense of style.

Pam Minick of Fort Worth, a National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame board member and honoree and former WPRA vice president, said the award is to encourage women in professional rodeo to carry on the tradition of wearing colorful western attire in the rodeo arena.

Barrel racing has a long history with the World's Original Indoor Rodeo®. The Fort Worth rodeo began holding an invitational ranch girls barrel race in 1955, not long after barrel racing competition started.

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**Photo Cutlines:**

Stevi Hillman, second from left, receives the \$5,000 cash Jerry Ann Taylor Award from Kit Moncrief, president of the National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame. The award is given to the best-dress cowgirl during the final performance of the Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo. Also pictured, Pam Minick (left) and FWSSR volunteer Shelby McCarty. FWSSR photo by James Phifer

Stevi Hillman of Weatherford, Texas, was named best-dressed cowgirl during the final performance of the Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo. She received the \$5,000 Jerry Ann Taylor Award co-sponsored by the National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame and the Women's Professional Rodeo Association. FWSSR photo by James Phifer