

## **The Rodeo Comes To Town**

In the 1960's, Coppell achieved some minor fame, due to the Coppell Junior Rodeo. Numerous local newspapers covered the event, and it was even featured in one national publication, a remarkable degree of success given that it was the brain child of an eight-year-old boy.

Mitch Waters, son of City Councilman C. T. Waters, developed the idea along with friend Robert Connally. With the help of Waters father and local dairy farmer Sam Lesley, the two succeeded in establishing the rodeo at Wagon Wheel Ranch, where present day Wagon Wheel Park is located. After two years, the event moved onto Waters' family land where the Golden Triangle Mobile Home Park is now located. A stadium and grandstand were built and the rodeos were held twice a month from May to September.

Waters continued to compete in the rodeo, as did a host of other well known Coppell residents. The list of those involved reads like a Who's Who of Coppell in the 1960's. The Dobeckas participated, as did the Cozby family, the Lees, the Harwells, and many others.

One young cowboy to compete was John Smith, who later became a professional musician and a news anchor for WMDT in Maryland. He recalls riding bulls eight or nine times, but never completing a full ride. After one particular fall found him the butt of the rodeo clown's jokes, Smith walked away. Still, more than forty years later Smith can sense the impact that the Coppell Junior Rodeo had on his life.

"I enjoyed the rodeo," Smith said. "It's where I really learned to appreciate girls in tight jeans."

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