

**FLORENCE
HUGHES FENTON
RANDOLPH
1898-1971**



**LADY
CHAMPION
TRICK
RIDER**

Florence Randolph had an incredibly career during the 1920s and 1930s. A ten-time world champion cowgirl trick and bronc rider, Florence worked in Wild West shows and made more than 500 rodeo appearances.

She was born Cleo Alberta Holmes in June 1898 in Augusta, Georgia. She hated her name so her father nicknamed her Florence. At age thirteen, she learned to ride horses. In October 1912 she joined Ringling Brothers Circus after its show in Augusta to become an apprentice for an equestrian family. Although only four-foot-six, she learned trick riding and roping while on tour.

In 1914, as “Princess Mohawk” she performed for Captain Jack King’s Wild West Show. She became a Roman rider, standing atop two horses, with one foot on each horse. She toured the country with her show “Princess Mohawk’s Wild West Hippodrome” in 1917 but a collapsing bleacher in Kentucky forced her into bankruptcy in 1918. Soon she joined the Barnum & Bailey Circus.

Between circus engagements, she entered rodeos as a bronc and trick rider. In 1919 she won the three-mile Roman standing race at the Calgary Stampede, receiving the Prince of Wales Trophy and a silver mounted saddle. She sold the saddle to movie actress Edith Sterling for \$1,500 because she needed the money. She soon entered rodeos all over the country. Her first marriage to bronc rider Angelo Hughes lasted only four months as he was killed in a Texas automobile accident.

Afterwards, she went to Hollywood to visit friends. While there, she doubled for famous movie actresses in scenes requiring daring horse stunts. The money was good but she missed the rodeo circuit. She soon won events in trick riding, trick roping, roman riding, bronc riding, and the all-around titles in rodeos everywhere.

After the 1923 Yankee Stadium rodeo, she married rodeo performer Louis Fenton in Newkirk but the marriage only lasted two years. The next year she went to London to compete at Wembley Stadium, and met the King and Queen of England. In 1925, she married rodeo promoter Floyd Randolph of Ardmore. In order to help her win at Madison Square Garden, she created an identical arena at the Randolph Ranch near Ardmore.

She won her first All-Around Cowgirl trophy at the 1926 Philadelphia SesquiCentennial. At the 1927 Madison Square Garden rodeo, she finally won the Cowgirl Trick Riding and the All-Around Championship. She was the first cowgirl to win the MGM Trophy, valued at \$10,000.

In 1939 Florence announced her retirement. During her years in Ardmore, Randolph operated a women’s rodeo riding school and her shop created rodeo costumes. The couple also organized the annual VFW Ardmore Rodeo. Florence was inducted into the Rodeo Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City in 1968 and posthumously in the National Cowgirl Hall of Fame in Fort Worth in 1994. Florence died in April 1971 at age 72 in Ardmore.

The cowgirl lives by her own rules, and makes no excuses. The cowgirls of the 1920s and 1930s certainly fit that description. They were like a sisterhood, supporting each other as they traveled from rodeo to rodeo amazing audiences as they performed challenging trick riding skills.