

## Casey Tibbs Film Life after Rodeo

By Cindy Lea Bahe

Fort Pierre native Casey Tibbs became the youngest man ever to win the national saddle bronc-riding crown and advance to become a 9-time World Champion. Tibbs' charismatic personality and unmatched horse riding abilities thrust him into the limelight. He appeared on the TV show "To Tell the Truth" and on the cover of "LIFE" magazine. Soon the Fort Pierre native's celebrity life was filled with bucking broncs, practical jokes, beautiful women, gambling, movies, money, and the highs and lows typically affiliated with fame.

After his rodeo career Tibbs became a stunt man, stunt coordinator, technical director, livestock consultant, wrangler and actor for scores of movies. He produced the bestseller video "Born to Buck" as well as other films. A little known fact is Tibbs was John Wayne's right hand technical man when the actor needed advice to produce realistic western films. Tibbs also acted or performed stunts in scores of movies alongside actors such as Will Rogers Jr., Rod McKuen and Steve Ford, son of President Gerald Ford.

Tibbs appeared as a character in "More Wild Wild West", a TV sequel to the "Wild Wild West" starring Robert Conrad and Ross Martin as well as "Climb and Angry Mountain" and "The Waltons" television shows. He also acted in the show "The Rounders" with Glenn Ford and Henry Fonda.

Casey's next venture in life was to build a museum where all South Dakota rodeo greats could be honored. Though he died in 1990, the Casey Tibbs Rodeo Center in Fort Pierre was eventually completed in 2009. Tibbs' boots, buckles, clothing, photos and cowboy hats are on display with other rodeo great's artifacts.

Tibbs final resting spot is at the Scotty Phillips Cemetery just outside of his hometown of Fort Pierre but his legacy lives on. Tibbs' life will be highlighted in the upcoming documentary "Floating Horses - The Life of Casey Tibbs." Film industry memorabilia complete with movie covers and photographs highlighting Tibbs film career are now on display at the Rodeo Center as well as the costume worn by Cole Elshere who portrayed Tibbs in the film. A one-night preview of the completed film will soon be shown at a theater near the Pierre/Fort Pierre area. Don't expect a sugar coated version though. The Producer Justin Koehler has worked hard to make the documentary true to life, depicting the highs and lows of Casey's life which will make you laugh but it also make you cry.