

Official Guide to the
99th Santa Cruz

COUNTY FAIR

A young boy and girl are leaning on a dark railing. The boy is on the left, wearing a blue denim shirt and overalls, looking slightly to the right. The girl is on the right, wearing a pink patterned shirt, looking towards the camera. The background is a bright, slightly blurred outdoor setting.

A Family Tradition for 99 Years

September 19 - 21, 2014

PRESENTED BY THE SANTA CRUZ COUNTY FAIR AND RODEO ASSOCIATION

Sonoita Fairgrounds, Highway 83, Sonoita, Arizona 85637

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2014 SANTA CRUZ COUNTY FAIR IS DEDICATED TO

Diane Collins



The 99th annual Santa Cruz County Fair is dedicated to Diane Collins. It would be hard to imagine anyone who has done more for the Santa Cruz County Fair and Rodeo Association than Diane. She has been actively involved in almost every aspect of the fairgrounds for the past twenty years.

She and her husband, Richard, came to Sonoita in 1993 to establish the C6 Ranch. They had moved from Marana where they had been running a cotton farm and breeding, raising, and racing quarter horses. Before settling in Marana, they lived in El Salvador and Guatemala,

where Richard was working for the Center for Disease Control and Diane worked as a nurse and as a liaison officer in the Guatemalan embassy.

Soon after her arrival in Sonoita, Diane became involved with the fairgrounds. "Richard was roping and we were running horses, so the fairgrounds was a natural focus for us," she explained. In 1996, she was asked to chair the Sonoita quarter horse show. "I had been to, maybe, two horse shows in my life," she said, "but I like projects." She was chairman of the show for the next four years, and served on the

show committee until 2005.

Her involvement in the horse show resulted in the building of the second arena. "I remember that one year we were in the arena until midnight and it was windy and cold," she said. "We needed to have a second arena, so we got panels and dug holes, and then we had a party in the middle of the new arena."

Diane also founded the Ranch Rodeo at the fairgrounds in 2001, which she chaired for several years. In that same year, she was elected president of the Anne C. Stradling Equine Foundation, a position she held until 2011. Currently she is the vice-president of the foundation, which has given out numerous scholarships to local students, and has made several improvements to the fairgrounds.

She co-chairs the committee that created and oversees the Bowman-Stradling History Center in Pioneer Hall, and is a founding member of the newly formed Santa Cruz County Fair and Rodeo Association Foundation, which is dedicated to providing funds, preserving the fairgrounds property and supporting events. Diane has also served on the Sonoita Race committee for the past years, and co-chaired the event this year.

Diane is also partly responsible for the beautiful bronze horse that watches over the entrance to the

fairgrounds. After a trip to Ruidoso and seeing the horse statues in front of the museum there, she happened to mention to sculptor Deborah Fellows that she would like to have a horse at the fairgrounds. "A couple of weeks later, Deborah called me and said, 'Diane, I have a horse for you'."

In recognition of all her hard work for the Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds, Diane was presented with the President's Award in 1997, and was presented with a life membership in 2001. She credits her husband for his support of all her activities. "Richard has been my personal co-chair, sponsor and supporter during all of our 52 years of marriage, and has come up with many creative ideas for events and projects that I have been able to put to really good use."

The Collins family has always been active supporters of 4-H, as well. While living in Marana, both Richard and Diane served as club leaders. "It was a family affair for us," Diane said. Their son Rich was involved in hog, horse and dog projects, winning grand champion hog one year. The Collins family has supported the Santa Cruz County 4-H auction each year, and Diane and Richard are looking forward to the day when their grandson, Liam, will be showing 4-H animals at the fair.