



Leaving Behind a Golden Legacy: **THE RASMUSSEN BOBCAT TRADITION**

BY DR. SHANE DOYLE

"I just love horses and working with them to get the best out of them." — **KATIE RASMUSSEN**

As winds of change blew through the Gallatin Valley in the spring of 2023, Paige and Shelby Rasmussen paused to reflect on their historic run as members of the MSU Bobcat Rodeo Team. Paige, 21, had just wrapped up her remarkable college career by capturing her third National Championship, this time in Goat Tying. Her other two titles include a Women's Individual All-Around title from 2021, and a Women's Team All-Around championship that she and her sister shared from that same year. The ladies expressed humble gratitude for their incredible success, and great joy at being forever members of Bobcat Nation. Championships and accolades aside, the sisters agreed that becoming part of their Bobcat Rodeo family was a highlight of their college rodeo experience, and one that they will take with them as they move on their life's journey. "I have never been prouder to be a Bobcat," said Shelby, now 23. "I love being a part of this team. I've caught myself multiple times thinking, 'Wow, I'm lucky to be a part of this program.'" Although both women say they didn't intend to come to MSU out of high school, and were looking

at colleges out of state, it seems obvious now that Bobcat Rodeo was the perfect fit for these talented and skilled competitors. The Rasmussen sisters are descendants of Bobcat varsity alumni; the ancestral foundation of their accomplishments in Bobcat rodeo began with both

their grandfathers in the 1950's. James Grasky (Bobcat Football) and Stan Rasmussen (Bobcat Rodeo) were varsity athletes at Montana State College, and established a legacy of athletic distinction for their children and grandchildren. Grasky's daughter Katie is Shelby and Paige's mother, and she was an accomplished barrel racer for the MSU Bobcat Rodeo team in the 1980's. During her time barrel racing, she met and married her husband Flint Rasmussen, the one person in the family without a degree from MSU-Bozeman.





Flint attended Montana Western College and acquired a BS in Secondary Education, becoming a high school math teacher at Havre High in the early 1990's. However, his teaching career was short-lived, as his love of the rodeo way of life and his unparalleled talents and abilities drew him back to the rodeo arena like a bull to a red flag. In rodeo circles, Flint is a clown in the most literal sense, and he truly needs no introduction. Truth

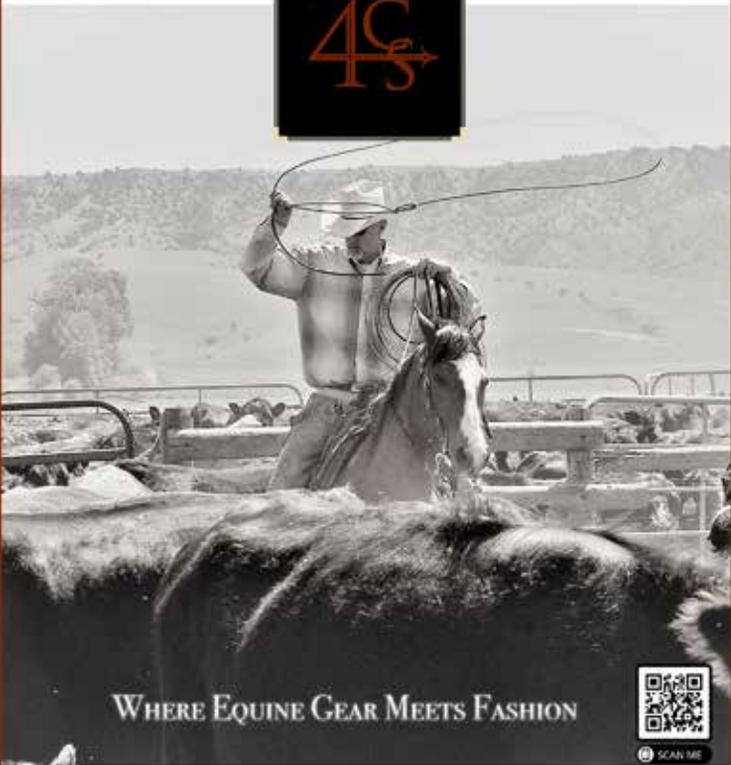
be told, Flint Rasmussen is likely the most recognizable name and face in 21st century rodeo, and for good reason. Starting off as an all-around clown and entertainer for the NRA (Northern Rodeo Association) in the mid-1990's, Flint's star quickly rose, and he signed an exclusive contract with the PBR (Professional Bullriders Association) soon after. He has been entertaining rodeo crowds as an all-around athletic

wonder for over three decades and, although he doesn't look like an Olympian, he can sprint and jump, disco and jig, breakdance and moonwalk, with ease and country grace. During a typical rodeo, Flint wows audiences with his singular combination of good-natured family fun that includes joyful silliness, irreverent teasing, outrageous mocking, and endless one-liners. Now 55 and the host of his own variety podcast "According to Flint," Rasmussen has attained legendary status as a renowned and beloved member of the rodeo world, and he's decided to move on to the next phase of his rodeo career. Electing to spare his body from more potential collisions with 2,000 pound bulls, Flint has officially retired from the arena as a clown. He'll be moving into the PBR announcer's booth full-time in 2024, and his retirement truly marks the end of one era and the beginning of another. During the midst of Flint's retirement tour in the spring of 2023, Shelby and Paige also seized opportunities to move on to their next challenges and opportunities. Shelby has accepted a position as the Coordinator for Operations, Sponsorship, & Events at Learfield College Rodeo, and Paige headed to MIT this summer to complete an internship in neuroimaging research. I asked her if it was stressful to perform at such high levels both inside the classroom and in the rodeo arena. Like a true champion with integrity and passion, she concurred that it could be stressful if she didn't stay on top of her work and make the most efficient use of her time. In other words, she feels pressured but not stressed out, because she understands that rising up and digging deep to do her personal best is, in and of itself, the greatest reward. Paige and Shelby share a sense of pride, honor and humility that endears them to their friends and competitors, and they have

represented their families and MSU in the most outstanding way. New horizons and opportunities both in and outside of the world of Rodeo excite and motivate the Rasmussen family and, after visiting them, it's clear what their secret to success is: Love and care, and a life dedicated to excellence have been passed down from generation to generation. Speaking over the phone from an indoor arena where she and Shelby were together training barrel-racing horses, Katie Rasmussen spoke from the heart. "I just love horses and working with them to get the best out of them." That spirit of love for horses, excellence, and each other is the legacy that the Rasmussen family has left with Bobcat and Montana rodeo fans, and for that we are forever grateful.



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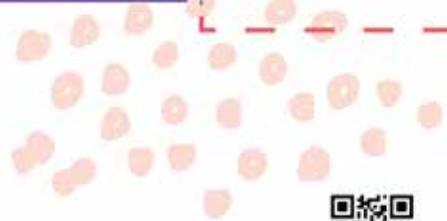
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