

## 2011 Nothin' But Try Scholarship INFORMATION

**Information:** The Nothin' But Try Scholarship was started in 2006 to honor former NIRA member and Southwestern Oklahoma State University graduate Shane Drury. The award in Shane's name is \$2,500. In addition, three more \$500 scholarships are available to honor Lee Akin, Betty Gayle Cooper-Ratliff and Levi Wisness, who also have exemplified the Nothin' But Try attitude and have strong ties to college rodeo. Lee is the only living honoree and while the others have passed, these are not memorial scholarships, rather they honor the way these individuals lived and in Lee's case is living his life.

**Criteria:** The Nothin' But Try Scholarships will be awarded to NIRA members that have faced adversity and never given up. Each of the honorees made their education a high priority while excelling in the rodeo arena. Their competitive spirit served them well as they faced big challenges in their lives. Through those adversities, they grew as individuals and never gave up. And, they have all been an inspiration to others.

Shane Drury – Shane was a two-time qualifier for the College National Finals Rodeo and made one appearance at the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo in bull riding. He finished in fourth place while at South Dakota State University. He earned his Bachelor's degree from Southwestern Oklahoma State University where he was part of the men's championship team. In 2002, he was diagnosed with Ewing's Sarcoma. After surgery and treatment, he returned to the rodeo arena and was again successful riding bulls. However the cancer returned and eventually took his life.

Lee Akin – Lee went to West Hills College and transferred to Southwestern Oklahoma State University where he earned his Bachelor's degree in Biology. He qualified for the CNFR 4 times in bull riding and was the reserve champion in 1996. He went on to have a successful career in the PRCA and PBR. He sustained severe head trauma in a bull riding accident in 2007 that he continues to have long-term effects from. He continues to use the gifts God gave him and inspire people

Levi Wisness – Levi earned his Bachelor's degree in ag business from the University of Wyoming. He won the steer wrestling championship at the College National Finals Rodeo in 2003. He had a cancerous tumor on his spinal cord at the base of his brain. With successful surgery and treatment, he was cancer free and working to return to the rodeo arena. His unexpected death in 2008 was a shock to family and friends.

Betty Gayle Cooper-Ratliff – Betty Gayle competed in college rodeo and won the breakaway title in 1972 for Eastern New Mexico State University. She started coaching at Southeastern Oklahoma State University in Durant in 1975. Her record as a coach is unsurpassed with 16 event and nine team championships. In addition she won many personal awards for her success in the arena and was inducted into the National Cowgirl Hall of Fame. She served as coach until her death in 1999.

The selection committee includes rodeo notables, Ty Murray, Stran Smith, and Bob Tallman along with members of Drury's family and others who have understanding of the Nothin' But Try spirit.

**Directions:** Attach an essay describing your adversity, how you dealt or are dealing with it and how it helped you grow as a person. The focus should be on personal growth and never giving up. Applications may also include letters of recommendation. If you have any questions contact Susan Kanode, scholarship administrator and CNFR media coordinator (817) 307-6336 or [susan@cowgirlimaging.com](mailto:susan@cowgirlimaging.com) or the NIRA office. Applications can be mailed or faxed to the NIRA office no later than **MAY 9, 2011. Please include the following form.**

## 2011 Nothin' But Try Scholarship APPLICATION

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

School attending fall of 2011 \_\_\_\_\_

Level as of fall of 2011 \_\_\_\_\_ Major \_\_\_\_\_

Graduation plans \_\_\_\_\_

Future plans \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

Signatures –

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Applicant)

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(coach or advisor)