

2023 Nothin' But Try Scholarship INFORMATION

Information: The Nothin' But Try Scholarship 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 honor Lee Akin, Betty Gayle Cooper-Ratliff and Levi Wisness, who 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. They honor the way these individuals lived and in Lee's case is living his life.

Criteria: Applicants must be an NIRA member in good standing. The Nothin' But Try Scholarships will be awarded to individuals that have faced adversity and never given up. Each honoree 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. The level of adversity is not as important as how you grew and learned from facing it.

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 4th at the CNFR 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 a 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 continues to affect him. Today, he uses the gifts God gave him and inspires people on a daily basis.

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 is a National Cowgirl Hall of Fame inductee. She served as coach until her death in 1999.

Many rodeo notables are on the selection committee and your application will be carefully reviewed and considered.

Directions: Attach an essay describing your adversity, how you dealt or are dealing with it and how adversity has helped you grow as a person. The focus should be on personal growth and never giving up. Also include your educational goals. Applications may 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 or the NIRA office. Applications can be emailed to Susan or mailed or faxed (509.252.1090) to the NIRA office no later than **Monday, May 22**. **Please include the following form.**

2023 Nothin' But Try Scholarship APPLICATION

DUE Monday, May 22, 2023

Name _____ Phone number _____

School attending fall of 2023 _____

Level as of fall of 2023 _____ Major _____

Graduation plans _____

Future plans _____

Email address _____

Mailing address _____

Signatures –

_____ Date: _____
(Applicant)

_____ Date: _____
(coach or advisor)