

## BIOGRAPHY

Joan Wells wanted to be a cowgirl at an early age. Her cousin, Almon Bates of Longmont, Colorado started teaching her trick roping when she was four years old. Almon had learned some basic rope tricks while competing in rodeos as a bull rider and saddle bronc rider. Between the ages of ten and twelve Joan appeared nearly every Saturday on Juvenile Theater, a variety show broadcast live from KOLN-TV in Lincoln, Nebraska. The variety show featured local children who performed as singers, dancers and musicians. On the show Joan performed trick roping and played guitar and sang western music. She soon was performing on local stage shows, for horse shows and conventions. Joan's father took her to see trick ropers at rodeos and bought her a horse as a 4-H project. She spent hours watching t.v. westerns and joined the Seward Saddle Club in her home town of Seward, Nebraska.

Her cousin told her father she would need to take more roping instruction from a professional trick roper. It was in the early 60's she began taking trick roping lessons from Jim Eskew, Jr. (World Champion Trick Roper) of Ardmore, Oklahoma. Eskew had traveled throughout the country and performed on his Dad's wild west show. He was considered the greatest trick roper of all times and did tricks no one could duplicate. Before long she was roping on her horse and performing for rodeos in Kansas, Iowa and Nebraska. J.W. Stoker of the "Great American Wild West Show" was also a mentor and helped Joan learn two rope tricks and horse catches.

Joan has made over 50 appearances in two productions of the Will Rogers Follies musical and appeared in the Macy's Annual Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City. She was featured in the re-enactments of the Buffalo Bill and Pawnee Bill Wild West Shows and has appeared at both the Nebraska and Kansas State fairs. Joan has made as many as 100 appearances a year performing for stage shows, conventions, school programs, western theme events and festivals. As if her rope work was not achievement enough, Joan is a natural musician and plays lead and rhythm guitar in western bands. Through the dedication to her rope handling, Joan enhances the imagery of the American Cowgirl...needless to say....Joan Knows the Ropes.