

Quincy Freeman (left) and the boots she designed for her rodeo fashion line (photos courtesy Quincy Freeman). Bottom, Freeman competes in rodeo (photo by Jack Upton Photography).

## A COLLECTION OF EDUCATION AND PASSION

AG SCIENCE UNDERGRAD QUINCY  
FREEMAN UNITES RODEO AND STYLE  
IN A NEW CLOTHING LINE



BY ELLEN COHUNE

AG SCIENCE MAJOR Quincy Freeman's mind is no easy one to rein in. From her agricultural roots and love of rodeo to her burgeoning business acumen and passion for fashion, the 21-year-old embodies the well-rounded Cal Poly alum – and she's still only a junior.

When Freeman saddles up one of her three horses and hits the competitive rodeo circuit, it's hard to take your eyes off her. And that's not just because the Women's Rodeo Team captain has impressive roping and riding skills. She typically competes in vividly decorated, highly personalized clothing and boots of her own design, bringing a playful, feminine touch to the often staid styles of traditional Western wear.

When Freeman was still in high school, her distinctive look caught the eye of representatives from Ariat International, a leading manufacturer of Western riding boots. They saw Freeman make a splash at the 2009 National High School Rodeo Finals and promptly invited her to design a line of boots, belts and clothing. Called the Quincy Collection, the colorful pieces reflect many of Freeman's interests: Mexican art, tattoos, rose motifs and vintage cowgirl themes.

"I wanted to bring boots to the rodeo world that I'd want to wear myself, something youthful and fun—dual-purpose boots you could wear riding or to a Willie Nelson concert," said Freeman. "I have always been very creative, so it was natural for me to combine my love of art with my love of rodeo. I started out making things for myself, like belts that I hand painted, decorated with rhinestones and whip stitched. It got a lot of attention, and now Ariat has given me a once-in-a-



lifetime opportunity to work with them."

Growing up the youngest of five children on a ranch in Reedley, Calif., Freeman had rodeo in her DNA. Her father, a cattle rancher, started the first online cattle trading company, and one of her uncles is a world champion bronco rider. But it was the women in Freeman's family—riders all—that were Freeman's greatest inspirations. "My heroes have always been cowgirls," Freeman said. "My grandma, Rosita, would dress up, put on lipstick and go out roping and riding. She'd always look beautiful, like those amazing vintage cowgirl pinups."

To honor her family, Freeman named the boots in her first Ariat collection after relatives.

Cal Poly is also something of a family affair; Freeman's father, uncle and sister are all alumni. "Growing up, I always had my eyes on Cal Poly," Freeman said. "And the school has a great rodeo team, which is another reason I wanted to be there. My dad competed on the men's team in the '60s." Freeman joined the team in her freshman year. Now a junior, she is proud to be team captain.

"It's the rodeo lifestyle and my passion for art and fashion that got me noticed and has given me a start, but it's my Cal Poly degree that's going to get me to the finish line," Quincy said.

Freeman is majoring in Agricultural Communication, with a minor in Agricultural Business, and credits her studies with helping her succeed as an entrepreneur. "My communication classes have given me a big confidence boost with my public speaking," she said. "And my business classes have been invaluable. Cal Poly has also expanded my love of agriculture. Even though I grew up on a ranch and compete in rodeos, I was not exposed to all aspects of the industry. I have really come to understand how important it is to respect and preserve our country's agricultural heritage." □

