

## The American Cowgirl Project

### The Best of the West as Role Model

Although Professional photographer Jamie Williams is quick to confess that she hasn't spent her life on horseback, growing up in Texas and spending time in Arizona, where she currently lives, has indoctrinated her to the mystique of the American cowgirl.

From Williams' viewpoint, "A lot has been done to honor and immortalize the cowboy, but for the most part the cowgirl has been overlooked."

Although her impressive career includes photographic work for mainstream corporate clients, a consuming passion for Williams is completing her vision of a multi-media project called American Cowgirl. In its finished form, the project will include a splashy coffee table-type book, a feature length documentary film and a collection of limited edition prints of Williams' photographs. The goal is to complete the entire project by July 2010, although Williams admits that it's a long process to round up all the cowgirls she desires.

"I'm going to travel to all 50 states to meet with and photograph real life American cowgirls," she explains. "When it's completed, it will also be a traveling exhibit, so that hopefully everyone can get an introduction to the American cowgirl's way of life, because it's a way of life that's quickly disappearing."

You might wonder how she came up with the idea for such an artistic undertaking. That bit of inspiration came from her mother.

"I was raised by a single mom who was working three jobs. Nonetheless, she taught my sister and me that we could do anything we wanted to do; that being a girl shouldn't hold you back. There's that same sort of spirit in the American cowgirl. She wasn't just cooking, raising kids and cleaning house, she was out there in the field, she was riding horses and working cattle right alongside the men." Williams says. "Today, I think that young women and girls are missing that type of positive role model. Girls can do anything they want today, yet so many of them idolize only celebrities. I'd rather they see what a woman can do, what she's capable of, and the American cowgirl embodies that."

Williams was fortunate to have included two cowgirls in her project early on, as they have since passed away: storied horsewoman Connie Reeves, who rode up until her death at age 101, and the legendary Dale Evans.

"I was the last person to interview Dale Evans," Williams says quietly. The accompanying portrait is both stunning and poignant.

Williams has coordinated a talented production team, and that is apparent in the video segment viewable online. To watch it and to see some of the images Williams has photographed, visit [www.americancowgirl.com](http://www.americancowgirl.com).