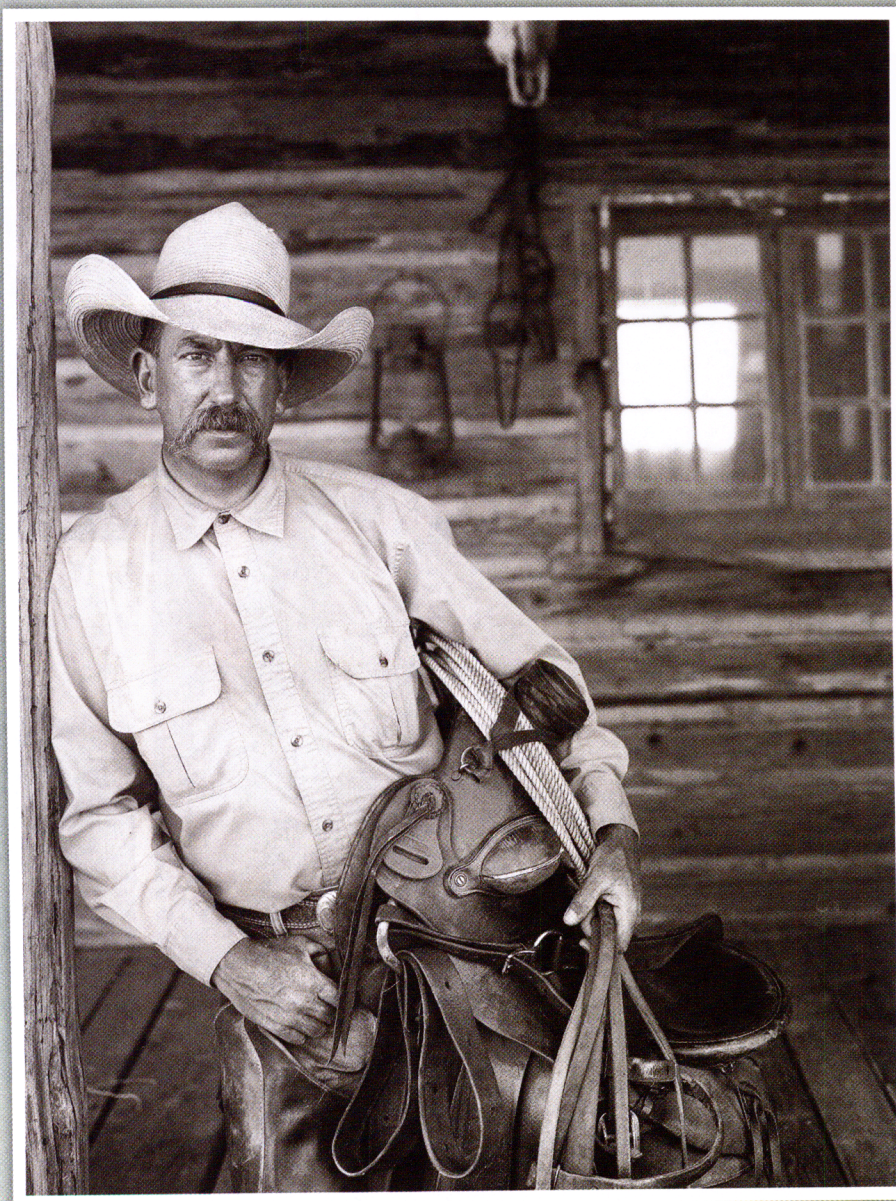


# 100 YEARS 100 RANCHERS



A NEW EXHIBIT AT  
THE PHOENIX AIRPORT  
PAYS A CENTENNIAL  
TRIBUTE TO ARIZONA'S  
RANCHING FAMILIES.

*By Kathy Montgomery*



**P**HOENIX'S SKY HARBOR INTERNATIONAL Airport stands as a symbol of modern transportation and commerce in Arizona. Yet tucked inside the steel and concrete of one of its busiest terminals lies a tribute to one of the state's oldest professions.

Through May 13, the Phoenix Airport Museum (located on Level 3 in Terminal 4) will host the debut exhibition of photographer Scott Baxter's project: 100 Years 100 Ranchers. Designated an official Centennial Legacy Project by the Arizona Historical Advisory Commission, the idea took shape nearly a decade ago when Baxter struck up a chance acquaintance with a handful of ranchers who gave him an appreciation for their lifestyle as well as the realization that it was rapidly changing. Baxter decided to preserve that legacy while creating his own.

"I wanted to have a body of work that meant something and did some good," Baxter says, "something that was worthwhile." For the project, he decided to include only those

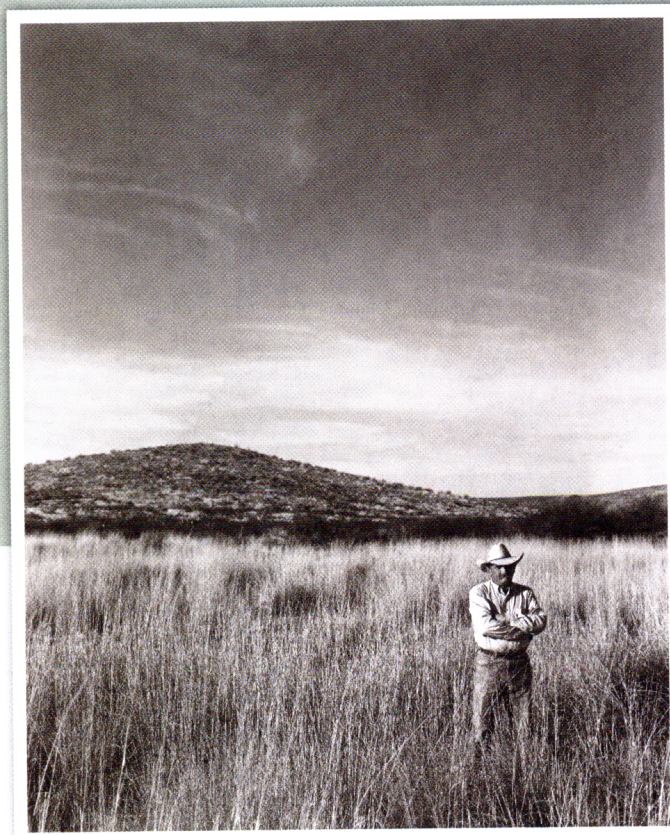
people whose families had been ranching since 1912 (the year Arizona became a state) or earlier. The exhibit's 100 ranchers represent about 65 ranches ranging from small, family-owned concerns to some of the state's largest operations.

The images are monumental black-and-white portraits, and include multiple generations of a few of Arizona's most prominent families. The portraits are formal, but not idealized. Their subjects gaze out from under mishapen, sweat-stained hats; their shirts askew and Wranglers worn.

"I tried to keep it very basic," Baxter says. "I wanted to do this how it would have been done 100 years ago. I didn't have a big bag of tricks. I had my cameras and film and tripod. I used a normal lens. It forced me to think more about composition."

Baxter figures he drove up to 100,000 miles in the course of the project and spent close to \$200,000 of his own money. Eventually he took a friend's advice to affiliate with a non-profit, and he formed a partnership with Through Each





Other's Eyes, a group dedicated to increasing cultural understanding through photography. But so far, his biggest donors have been his own family members, and his biggest supporters have been the ranchers themselves.

"There were lots of times I thought, I've had enough, I just can't do it," Baxter says. Then a rancher would hand him a check or he'd receive an encouraging e-mail. "They're just genuine, hardworking people. I would have lunch with them and they would always say grace. The first thing they would

ask for was rain. But every single person would ask for my safe travels. For me that was moving because it was real. It's not for anybody's benefit. It's just who they are."

*After May 13 the exhibit will tour museums throughout the state, concluding Arizona's centennial year at the Tucson International Airport. For more information, visit [www.100years100ranchers.com](http://www.100years100ranchers.com).*