

# The Light that was Janet

*A tribute to a life well-lived and 55 years of dedication to the American Angus Association*

*by Elizabeth Rosson*

During the last half a century, much has changed. Yet, for the past 55 years, every morning before the sun stretched over Saint Joseph, Mo., there was one constant light painting the early morning canvas — Janet Shackelford's presence at the American Angus Association.

The first to claim her spot in the parking lot nearly every morning, Shackelford had a few self-assigned duties she took very seriously.

"She always had the lights turned on for everyone, and she was there to open the doors when she saw someone approaching with their arms full," says Tammy Poirier, longtime co-worker and friend.

It wasn't merely punctuality that marked her routine. It was a symphony of kindness, dedication and unwavering commitment that colored the start of each workday.

Janet passed Oct. 24, 2023, at the age of 73. Her colleagues gathered Nov. 9, 2023, at the Association office to celebrate Shackelford's life and service to the Angus breed.

"Janet left us far too soon, but what a legacy she left," says Bethany Kelly, vice president of human resources. "We gathered as her second family to share memories and stories about her contagious smile and personality."



"Enjoy your job. Always remember that there's other jobs, but if you don't enjoy them, then that's all they are. Just jobs."

— Janet Shackelford

To many, Janet wasn't just a co-worker; she embodied the spirit of family. Her nurturing instinct went beyond professional duties, often anticipating needs before they were even expressed.

"She took pride in helping a friend and co-worker that is in a wheelchair," says Tanya Knadler, customer service representative at the Association. "She met her every morning at her vehicle to assist her into work and helped her every evening — sunshine, rain, sleet and snow, she was out there helping — always with a smile."

What set Shackelford apart was not just her consistency, but her boundless kindness, infectious humor and caring nature, Knadler adds.

"Janet had a heart of gold, always willing to help others," she explains. "Her half-ornery smile and her raspy voice will forever be in our hearts."




Her peers say even from her hospital bed, her first words to visitors were never about her health, but to ask how things were at the office.

"Her dedication to the Association was remarkable up to the very end," says Jerry Cassady, director of member services. "She told me many times she did not want to retire, and she needed to get better so she could get back to the office,

arrive early and turn the lights on for me, which she did for 55 years."

Shackelford will be missed, but her legacy of compassion and generosity will endure as a guiding light for generations to come.

In early spring, the Angus Foundation will lay a 6" x 12" paver inscribed with her name, and a memorial tree will be planted on the property honoring Shackelford's dedicated service to Angus.

"Janet will always be a part of Angus and what shaped the walls inside 3201 Frederick Avenue," Poirier says. "She will be dearly missed by all of us." 

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Elizabeth Rosson is a freelancer from Louisa, Va. She was the 2023 editorial intern.