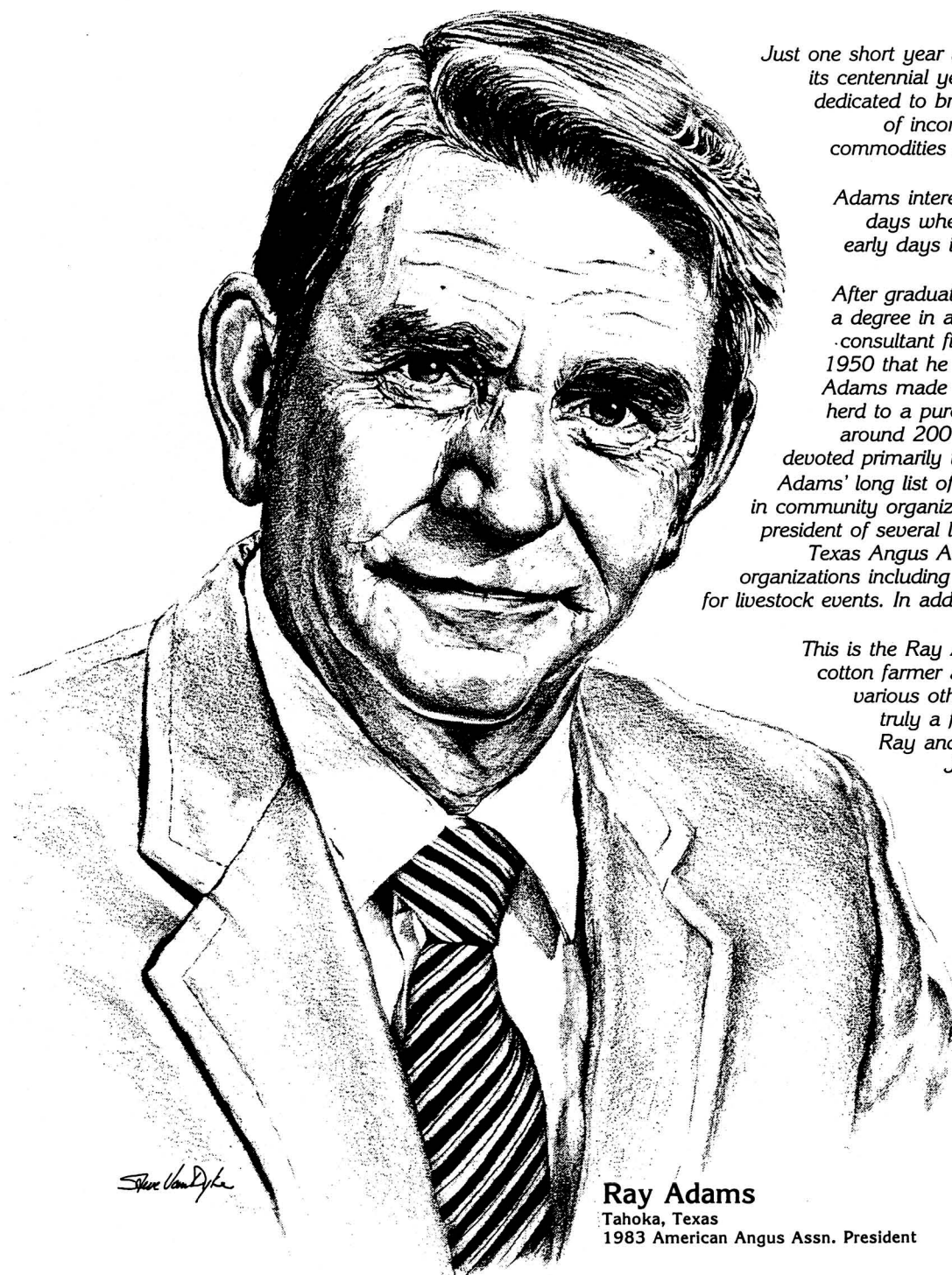


# The Retiring President's Message

Presented at the American Angus Assn. 100th Annual Meeting, Nov. 13, 1983, Louisville, Ky.



**Ray Adams**  
Tahoka, Texas  
1983 American Angus Assn. President

*Just one short year ago the American Angus Assn. started its centennial year under the leadership of a tall Texan dedicated to breed progress. Ray Adams' only source of income is derived from agriculture; the only commodities sold on his southwest Texas ranch are black cattle and white cotton.*

*Adams interest in livestock dates back to childhood days where he grew up on a stock farm. Those early days included 4-H and FFA activities as well as sports at Tahoka High School.*

*After graduating from Tarleton State University with a degree in accounting, Adams headed his own tax consultant firm from 1950 to 1963. It was also in 1950 that he started farming and ranching. In 1959 Adams made the transition from a commercial cattle herd to a purebred registered Angus herd. A herd of around 200 females plus 2,000 acres of cropland, devoted primarily to cotton, comprises the present ranch.*

*Adams' long list of memberships and leadership positions in community organizations is astounding. He has served as president of several local Angus associations as well as the*

*Texas Angus Assn. He is active in various other cattle organizations including the NCA. He is a sought-after speaker for livestock events. In addition, Adams is listed in Who's Who in South and Southwest Agriculture.*

*This is the Ray Adams that the public knows: rancher, cotton farmer and supporter of agricultural as well as various other community activities. But he is also truly a family man. Married for over 33 years, Ray and wife Nan have two children, Jim and JoAnna. Both children are married with families of their own. And the grandchildren are Ray's pride and joy.*

*Both Jim and JoAnna were active in Angus youth activities; both exhibited Angus cattle at fairs and shows and JoAnna is a former Texas Angus Queen.*

*Nan, a schoolteacher, has been active in auxiliary activities, being a past president of both the state and national auxiliaries.*

*As president of the American Angus Assn., Ray's most rewarding experience was traveling from coast to coast and meeting new friends while talking and promoting Angus.*

*Hats off to this southwest Texas cowboy who led the American Angus Assn. during its centennial year.*

**A**s your president, I have traveled many miles on behalf of the Association. It has been a very busy year for me and one of the most rewarding years of my life. I met new friends along the way and renewed acquaintances with many old friends all across this land.

While my travels were rewarding, they were also very educational, because I was continually amazed to view the variety of management practices and the many environmental differences. It was educational to see the enthusiasm and the sincere dedication of Angus breeders even during adverse conditions such as the drought and the depressed agricultural commodity prices. In the face of all these, almost every state had some type of centennial celebration.

The centennial year was culminated at a gala event right on the grounds of our Association headquarters in St. Joseph in September, with over 1,100 in attendance representing almost 40 states and six foreign countries. I had the honor of being a delegate at the World Aberdeen-Angus Secretariat meeting held in conjunction with the other events in St. Joseph. I was thrilled to realize that the Angus breed was the common denominator that brought us all together during these days of celebration. If you were present you know the feeling of pride I am trying to describe. If you were unable to attend, then you missed a very special event. The entire staff of the Association did a tremendous job putting everything together.

As for myself, the event made me very humble and thankful that 100 years ago a group of men had the wisdom and foresight to organize the American Angus Assn. We owe these great men of yesteryear a debt of gratitude.

However, in retrospect, I believe these same men would be pleased and extremely proud of the Association in its present day form and its course of direction during these 100 years.

I know that since its inception in 1883 each year has served as a building block that led to the present position which we enjoy and is envied by all other breeds. Each building block is just as important as the other, but I believe I was privileged to serve during one of the most exciting times in the life of our Association.

The directors I served with over the past seven years have to be some of the greatest men in our Angus fraternity. Men of dedication. Men of integrity. Men that cared about the breeder as well as the breed.

Technology has developed very rapidly over the last seven years, but your board of directors would not be intimidated by mere technology. They became innovative, too. They tightened their belts and met the situations head on and resolved the issues.

Go down memory lane with me for a few minutes and let your thoughts mirror back on some things that happened during the past seven years.

The breed improvement department, the best in the industry, has been continually

updated. During this period we saw performance pedigrees, sire evaluation reports, the conception and birth of the Pathfinder reports. Your board has been discussing expected progeny difference (EPD) at great length. Rest assured if the industry goes to EPDs, your breed improvement department will be the front runner.

A blood typing rule was passed—and don't forget—the very mandate for this rule was in the original Petition for Charter dated Nov. 23, 1883, which reads "so as to maintain unimpaired the purity of said breed." This rule was brought to the annual meeting for a healthy discussion and was ratified by the voting delegates by a margin of 281 to 7.

Genetic defect rules were passed and enforced to protect the breed as well as the breeder.

The Angus Journal was purchased and has become the finest among all breed publications, as well as being an excellent communication tool between the breeder and the St. Joseph office. The Journal has also become a great financial resource for our Association.

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**As I step down and turn the ship over to a new captain, I would have only one directive: Keep a steady course! Keep the bow pointed in the direction we have traveled for 100 years!**

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We reached the 10 million mark in registrations, and we registered our first embryo calf.

The National Junior Angus Foundation was established and the first National Junior Angus Board of Directors was elected.

The Certified Angus Beef program was established, being the first breed association to promote its product from conception to the dinner table. It now appears the CAB program is about to reach maturity under the capable leadership of Mick Colvin and Fred Johnson. When it does, and there is no doubt in my mind that it will, then CAB will be a great public relation tool as well as being a strong financial asset to both the Association and to the producer.

Yes, we have seen some very exciting times during the last seven years. Not only have we seen exciting times—we have seen history made!

Now some of you may think that being a director is easy and all glamour, but I submit to you the opposite is true. It's a lot of hard work. You get very little praise and a lot of criticism. Besides, it's not the best paying job in town!

Several years ago when I was chairman of the finance committee, I told a little story that had a terrific moral. I have been asked

many times to repeat the story and I promised that I would someday, and this seems to be a pretty good time to use this illustration again.

The story goes something like this:

Once upon a time there was an old man, a boy and a donkey. They were going to town, and it was decided that the boy should ride.

As they went along, they passed some people who exclaimed that it was a shame for the boy to ride and such an old man to walk. The old man and the small boy decided maybe the critics were right, so they changed positions.

Later they passed some more people who then exclaimed that it was a shame for the old man to make such a small boy walk. The two decided maybe the critics were right and maybe both should walk.

Soon they passed some more people who exclaimed that it was pure stupidity to walk when the old man and boy had a donkey to ride. The two decided maybe the critics were right, so they decided that they both should ride.

The pair soon passed another group of people. This group said that it was a shame to put such a load on a poor little animal. The old man and the boy then decided that maybe the critics were right. They decided to carry the donkey.

As they crossed the bridge, they lost their grip on the animal and he fell into the river and drowned.

Now the moral of the story is this: If you try to please all the people all the time, you'll finally lose your ass!

Your directors listen to a lot of people and I am sure sometimes they feel much like the old man and the small boy. In fact, I am sure they do, because I've been down that road myself.

Well, we have gone down memory lane for a few minutes and now its time to look to the future.

It has been said that there is a time for all seasons. There's a time for spring and summer; there's a time for fall and winter.

Yes, there is a time for all seasons. There's a time to come; and there's a time to go. I'm glad I came your way seven years ago, but now it's time to go. As I go, I feel very proud to have been a small part of this Association for the past seven years—and even prouder to have been able to associate with all of you and to count you as my personal friends.

I'm proud to know that as I leave, I'm convinced our breed has stood the test of time and our Association has been around for 100 years to prove it. I leave knowing full well our Association is in the best of hands and I feel very comfortable and secure in that fact.

As I step down and turn the ship over to a new captain, I would have only one directive: Keep a steady course! Keep the bow pointed in the direction we have traveled for 100 years!

Good luck, God bless and proceed with full steam ahead!

**AJ**