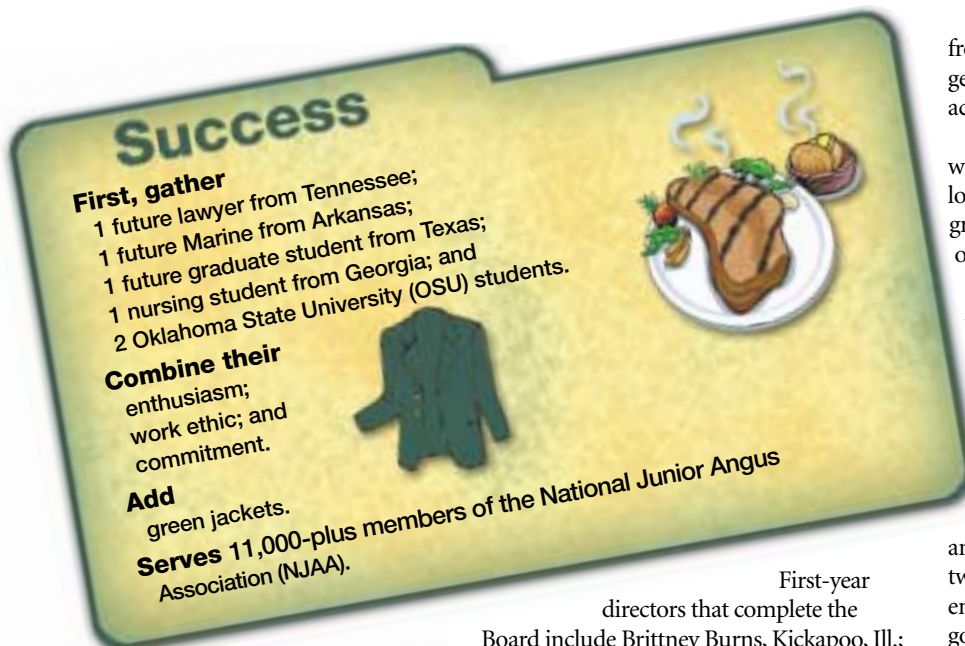


# NJAA Officers Know the Recipe for Success

BY SHELIA STANNARD



from the juniors whom we serve. I enjoy getting to know so many juniors from all across the United States.

**Allison:** Having the opportunity to work with young Angus members. I absolutely love children and really enjoy watching them grow and become leaders in their organizations.

*How do you feel you've grown during your years in the junior programs, and how do you think you've helped others grow during the past two years?*

**Jamie:** There are many things that the Angus program has helped me develop, but it most certainly has enriched my responsibility, leadership, dedication and competition abilities during these past two years. I hope others realize that with enough work ethic and determination that goals are attainable.

**Sy:** While on the junior Board, I have developed a greater knowledge of the beef industry and how the Angus breed plays a role in the industry. I hope I have passed on my enthusiasm of the meat industry so that others might realize the importance of the final product the Angus breed is producing.

*How do you see yourself involved in the Angus business and agriculture in the future?*

**Miranda:** I would like to do tax work for farmers and to help them with

The six young people who are winding down their two-year terms on the NJAA Board of Directors know what it takes to be successful leaders. Most of them had prepared their entire lives to serve on the Board, and they agree that the experience of being Board members will help them in future endeavors.

"As this team pulls together using their full potential, their past NJAA experiences and their knowledge of the beef industry, they are creating the foundation for the future of the NJAA," James Fisher, director of junior activities, says. "This foundation will be based on an understanding of what preparation is necessary to train leaders for the industry — now and in the future."

Sonya Smith, Lebanon, Tenn., leads the Board. Smith is a graduate of Cumberland University, and she will pursue law school in the fall. Brandon Douglas, Gentry, Ark., vice chairman, plans to leave for boot camp following the 2001 Leaders Engaged in Angus Development (LEAD) Conference. Allison Porter, Jefferson, Ga., communications director, is studying to be a nurse at the Medical School of Georgia; and Sy Olson, Hereford, Texas, Angus Foundation director, will work on his master's degree after he graduates from Texas A&M University. Miranda Grissom, Prague, Okla., leadership director, attends OSU, and Jamie Meyer, Douglass, Kan., membership-information director, will graduate from OSU this spring.

First-year directors that complete the Board include Brittney Burns, Kickapoo, Ill.; Heath Johnson, Tupelo, Miss.; Tom Patterson, Columbus, Mont.; Jessica Sawyer, Bassett, Neb.; Ryan Sweeney, Mason, Mich.; and Christy Walther, Mount Crawford, Va.

During this spring's Board meeting, the six officers reflected on their experiences and planned for their post-NJAA lives.

*What has been the highlight of your time on the NJAA Board?*

**Brandon:** Traveling and getting letters



One of the main activities of the NJAA Board of Directors is raising funds for the Angus Foundation, the highlight of which is selling the Angus Foundation Heifer Package each year at the National Western Stock Show in Denver. Shown above with the 2000 heifer are (from left) Sy Olson; Julie Dameron (1999-2000 Board); Sonya Smith; Julie Scarlett (1999-2000); Allison Porter; Lindsey Trospen (1999-2000); and Miranda Grissom.

PHOTO BY SHAUNA ROSE HERMEL

financial and tax hardships they face. I would like to expand my Angus herd, but this may take a little longer since I need to establish my career first.

**Sy:** In the future I plan to be involved in the feedlot industry, allowing me to apply firsthand the knowledge I have gained while on the Board, promoting the Angus breed and its importance in the beef industry.

*Describe your most enjoyable memory of being on the Board.*

**Sonya:** There are so many! My most enjoyable times have been after we have accomplished our tasks for the day and the 12 of us, or however many of us were at an event, would hang out.

**Brandon:** My most enjoyable memory was at the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS), the moment when James read the names of the six new Board members. I remember the time he called my name, and I could hardly walk to the stage.

*What has been the biggest challenge you've faced while on the Board? How did you overcome it?*

**Allison:** Managing my time between being on the Board, attending nursing school and participating in other extracurricular activities has been my biggest challenge. Sometimes I have to sit back and remind myself of what an awesome opportunity and honor it has been to have the privilege to serve on the Board.

**Sonya:** One challenge has been communicating with 14 other Board members and advisors who live all over the country and keeping everyone informed and up-to-date. We have tried to overcome this by having monthly e-mail updates, conference calls and letters.

*How do you think your personality fit your position on the Board?*

**Miranda:** I am a very driven person who likes to be challenged. Serving on the Board challenges me every day to develop creative and unique ideas that will please 11,000 people ranging from infants to 21-year-olds. The drive required to perform such duties to the best of my ability and to make sure all of my duties are met really excites me and makes me feel my work is important and makes a difference in someone's life.

**Sonya:** I think any of the Board members would tell you that I am the type of person who is not afraid to tell you how I feel about a topic or task, then go get it done.

*Describe what you think are the biggest issues facing the Angus business and the beef industry today.*

**Jamie:** The biggest issue facing the beef industry and the Angus business is the same issue that businesses in today's workforce are faced with: keeping up with the fast-paced and changing technology.

**Sy:** Yesterday fed cattle sold for \$80/hundredweight (cwt.). As we look at demand for beef in the meat industry and the value of a Certified Angus Beef® (CAB®)-stamped carcass, the Angus breed has positioned itself to benefit for the next several years. Research and data collection — on carcass characteristics and genetic relationships to the final product — have allowed the Angus breed to establish

substantial evidence of the reliability of its research. The challenge to the Angus industry is to let the commercial breeders know this. The challenge to the beef industry is to promote grid and value-based marketing and to give the commercial man an understanding of the process and a method to achieve success in raising cattle.

*Describe the camaraderie and friendships you've developed while on the Board.*

**Jamie:** I have made friends on the Board, but I also have made friends outside the Board. Being on the Board has allowed me to meet people that otherwise I would not have been able to meet. The friendships that I have made in the Angus program are those that will last a lifetime.

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PHOTO BY SHEILIA STANNARD

Above: The NJAA Board meets three times each year to plan activities. Shown here are Allison Porter and Sy Olson with James Fisher, director of junior activities.

Below: The NJAA Board helps lead activities at the Barnyard Olympics during the Atlantic National Junior Angus Show. From left, Sy Olson, Jamie Meyer and Brandon Douglas practice a team-building exercise.



PHOTO BY ANGIE STUMP DENTON

**Sy:** The friendships you develop while being on the Board can be described as a family that you get to see five or six times a year but you talk to all the time.

*What has your team done that will make a lasting impression on the NJAA?*

**Miranda:** I hope the new golf tournament will make a lasting impression on the NJAA membership. I hope to be remembered as one of the hardest working, most respected groups ever to have served in this capacity.

**Allison:** I think our group will be remembered for our teamwork. We really have come together and worked hard as a team. We all are hard workers and have set a great example for future Boards.

*Who has helped you become the person you are today?*

**Brandon:** My parents, past Board members, teachers and the American Angus Association staff all have helped me grow.

**Sonya:** I believe everyone with whom you come in contact has something different to teach you. It may be a positive lesson or perhaps show you how not to behave. There have been many people who have shaped me into the person I am today, but my family has been the major influence.

*What is your personal philosophy?*

**Allison:** "Be a task great or small, do it well or not at all." I believe, if you are going to commit yourself to something, then you should give your all and try your very best to achieve that task.



PHOTO BY SHELLA STANNARD

Interacting with other junior members and helping them get involved in the organization are major roles of NJAA Board members.

**Sonya:** "If you are going to do something, be prepared for the worst, strive for the best, and always do it right."

*What is the greatest benefit you've gained during your years in the NJAA?*

**Miranda:** The benefit of adapting to change is one thing I definitely will take from my experiences with the junior programs. Going from show to show, event to event, meeting to meeting or event to school instilled in me the ability to adapt well to change.

**Sy:** As a person I have gained a better grasp on the importance of working well with people. Communication is what makes a business fail or succeed. I hope to take

the skills I have learned and to apply them to everyday life.

*What led you to be active in junior programs?*

**Jamie:** My parents introduced me to Angus cattle. I started to attend more and more state events and decided that I would like to become more involved in the junior program. From there I started to attend national events. With encouragement from my state, I realized that I not only wanted to be a leader in my state association, but on the national level, too. I set goals and developed a plan to achieve them.

**Sy:** The love for cattle and the history of Angus prompted my family to get involved in the Angus business. Raising a family in an outstanding junior program was a great influence in my family's decision.

*How will your activities on the Board help you as you prepare for your professional futures?*

**Brandon:** I have developed my communication skills and have learned to work in a group, not just as one person.

**Miranda:** My activities have given me the opportunity to work well with very diverse people and to learn to generate ideas and to make decisions based on group consensus. These opportunities, along with my ability to adapt well to change, will help me to do so in a professional environment. All professionals need them, and I feel the NJAA definitely has exposed me to these skills and helped me to develop them further.



PHOTO BY ANGIE STUMP DENTON

From left, Sonya Smith, Jamie Meyer and Miranda Grissom get serious at an NJAA Board meeting during the North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE) in Louisville, Ky.

