

# CAROL BLOOM

## *A Woman of Distinction*

BY JULIE GRIMES ALBERTSON

**T**he difference between extraordinary and ordinary is a little something extra. Carol Bloom, president of the American Angus Auxiliary has that something extra, and she has it in droves.

Carol says that there are only two things she loves more than Angus cattle — her horses and her family. For Carol, that's saying a lot, because horses have consumed her life for more than four decades, and you only have to look at the twinkle in her eye when she mentions her family to know how important they are to her.

Bloom credits her parents for giving her the opportunity to be a superior horsewoman, and superior she was. In 1948 she won the American Royal Open Saddle Seat competition at eight years of age. She won the 1953 and 1956 International Girls Equitation in Chicago for saddle seat. Her competitive spirit was nurtured at an early age.

When it came time for college, Bloom chose Michigan State University. Once finished with her undergraduate degree, she entered MSU's College of Veterinary Medicine. Her spirit would be tested during this time, as she was only one of three women who graduated out of 64 members of the class of 1966.

"Getting into vet school was like pulling teeth for a woman at that time," said Bloom. "To be a female and get in the profession, you just about had to be gold-plated."

Bloom married during her senior year of vet school, and later had two children, Denise and Rex.

Once graduated, Carol went to work for Dr. Tom Duncan, a Chicago DVM,



and became the first woman veterinarian on the harness tracks in Chicago. She has remained at the tracks for 26 years in some capacity.

After a year in Dr. Duncan's practice, Bloom decided to go it alone. She and her husband bought a farm in northwestern Indiana, 1 1/2 hours from the Chicago tracks.

Her husband passed away in 1971, and Carol was left to the challenging task of supporting two young children and maintaining her veterinarian practice.

She continued working where it all began for her, the harness tracks. It was there that she met her present husband, Don Bloom, then the caretaker of the World Champion Standardbred horse,

Albatross. Don had a successful, 10-year career training standardbreds.

The two married three years later and now have two daughters, Deanna, 14, and Lisa, 15, who are active Angus juniors.

"When we got married, Don asked me if there was one thing I've always wanted to do as a family. I immediately said yes — raise Angus cattle." The Blooms have been in the Angus business ever since.

While maintaining a cattle farm is enough to keep many people busy, Carol manages her other full-time job as well with the help of her family. "I worked just the race tracks seven days a week. But I got tired of the long drive and decided to diversify my practice." A typical week for Carol now consists of three days at the tracks, one full day of equine surgery at her clinic and two days of farm calls.

Until this year, Bloom also took care of three other Angus herds. However, she wasn't able to continue due to her already full schedule.

Because women of her generation were not encouraged to be practicing vets, Bloom now works to remedy that problem. She encourages young women interested in veterinary medicine by offering two or three apprenticeships each year.

"When I was in vet school I wanted to get experience with a vet. But because I was a woman, many asked what's a tiny thing like you going to do?" Bloom has always believed it's not how big you are, it's how well you handle animals. It's more psychological than physical.

Bloom was returning from a farm

visit with her current apprentice, Laurie Reese, from Fox Croft College in Virginia, when they noticed Carol's two daughters jumping up and down and waving their arms wildly. As they pulled up to the barn, the girls said they had just pulled a calf.

"Deanna said 'Mom, I stuck my hand in there and pulled it out, but I shut my eyes.' I said, 'why did you shut your eyes Deanna, your head wasn't going in there!'"

While Carol does all the herd health and AI work at her family's farm, she says Don and their daughters keep their Angus herd flourishing. "Angus cattle have been good for our whole family. We go to shows together, sales together and other cattle functions together as a family," says Carol.

Bloom's four children are a constant source of pride for Carol and her husband. Her oldest daughter, Denise Hayes, 26, attended Indiana University and now works for a Florida telecommunications company.

Rex Hayes, Carol's 24-year-old son, graduated from Purdue University and now lives with his wife, Jennifer in California. Hayes, an agricultural economics major, works for Toyota Industrial Equipment Company.

Don and Carol's oldest daughter, 15-year-old Lisa, is quite involved in the Angus business. Her most recent accomplishment was winning grand champion 4-H steer at the Porter County Fair last summer. Lisa received \$5 per pound for her champion steer.

Fourteen-year-old Deanna, the Bloom's youngest child, is also involved in Angus activities. Deanna's cow was the mother of Car Don Westville, a bull that's been successful and a highlight for the family.

The Blooms have enjoyed being in the Angus business. Carol says all her children profited from the time they spent as a family with their cattle.

Carol's focus on children is what led her to the American Angus Auxiliary. She wants to make a contribution to the Angus breed because it has given her family something quite valuable—time together.

As president of the Auxiliary, Carol promotes Angus cattle and the Auxiliary throughout the country. She at-



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— Carol Bloom

tends all major Angus shows and is in charge of the Auxiliary executive committee and board.

Bloom also writes a monthly column for the *Angus Journal* and a quarterly newsletter for Auxiliary members.

The quality of Auxiliary members past and present is a favorite topic of Bloom's. We have some wonderful ladies that have been our stays in the organization and who we couldn't do without. Those people are still in command in certain places and that's wonderful. Many take new, young women on as co-chairs to learn a position, so someday the long-time officers can say — "I've done enough."

One long-time Auxiliary member, Rachel Breck of Connecticut, is especial-

ly dear to Carol. Last year at Louisville when she became president, Rachel gave her a gold broach with pictures of two jumping horses on it. The horses were two that Breck had shown at the 1929 Grand Nationals in England.

"She told me she wanted me to have it, because I would appreciate it more than anyone else. I was so honored that she would think of me."

That's the kind of people you meet at Auxiliary functions, Bloom says. The Auxiliary is comprised of diverse and educated women who want to make a

positive contribution to the breed. "The women taking over officer positions and committees are very progressive." The organization includes mothers, cattlemen, teachers, accountants and businesswomen, also many who manage to do more than one of the jobs mentioned above.

"Some people who don't know us think the Auxiliary is just a bunch of stuffy, snooty old women. That's not the case at all," says Bloom.

The Auxiliary is able to reach the woman of the house who is buying meat. That's why the group is allotting money in its budget for educational and promotional programs aimed at the general public. Bloom believes that, while it may be risky, change is good. "If you don't venture, nothing gained, and we're all pretty adventurous."

Adventurous is a good way to describe Bloom, as from an early age she has set goals for herself and achieved them. She now has her sights set on even higher goals. Carol would like to someday be president of a veterinarian association.

She also has expressed sincere interest in the office of national director of the American Angus Association. Bloom believes that there will be a place on the Board of Directors for a woman.

"Women perceive things differently than men and, I believe, they could contribute very valuable ideas to the Association."

But like many of her predecessors, it all comes down to one thing for Carol Bloom, working for the breeders of tomorrow. "Everybody asks why do you get involved? I say I do it for the two things I love — kids and the best breed in the world, Angus."