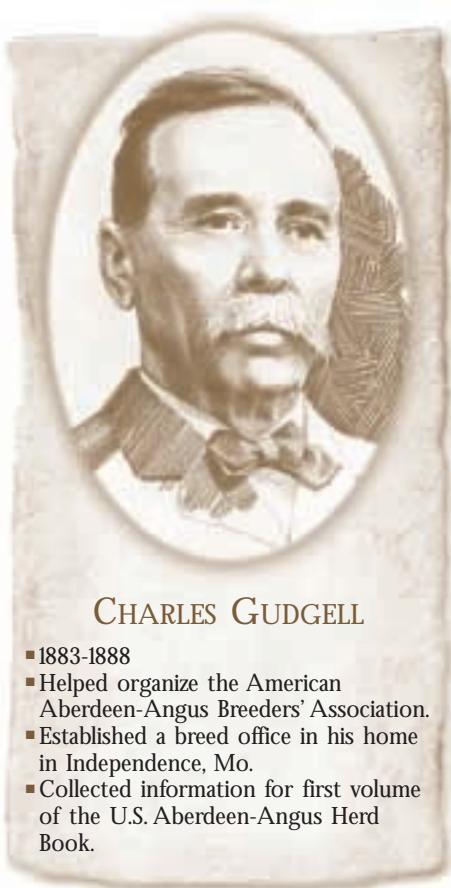


# The Faces of the AMERICAN ANGUS ASSOCIATION

*Nine men of vision have sat at the helm of the national Angus organization, helping lay the foundation of the American Angus Association we know today and what it will become in the new millennium. Here we take a look at the tenures of Charles Gudgell, Thomas McFarlane, Charles Gray, W.H. Tomhave and Frank Richards, tracing the history of the Association through 1963.*

## PART 1 OF 2

BY KEITH EVANS



**CHARLES GUDGELL**

- 1883-1888
- Helped organize the American Aberdeen-Angus Breeders' Association.
- Established a breed office in his home in Independence, Mo.
- Collected information for first volume of the U.S. Aberdeen-Angus Herd Book.

In the 116-year history of the American Angus Association, only nine men have served as chief executive officer of the organization. Each has exerted a unique influence on the Association and the Angus breed.

Each secretary — or executive secretary or executive vice president, as their jobs have been titled — has been unique. The situations they faced have been varied. Regardless of the challenges, each was charged with keeping accurate records, promoting growth of the Angus business and of the Association, and serving the members' needs.

Until 1968 the executive officer of the Association carried the traditional title of "secretary." He was the person who kept the Association's records and served as secretary to the Board of Directors. But even from the beginning, the secretary was much more than the title implied. He also executed the policies of the Board and was charged with day-to-day management of the organization. What's more, he was and is the "face" of the organization — not only to the members, but to the beef industry at large.

Keep in mind that, when the Association was organized in 1883, there was little precedent for what a breed association was or was supposed to do. In Scotland the

Angus organization had been formed in the 1860s. It mainly kept and published ancestral records of both Angus and Galloway cattle in what was called the Black Polled Herd Book. The American Shorthorn Association, the oldest breed registry in the United States, had been organized only a decade earlier, in 1873 — by coincidence, the same year George Grant imported the first Angus cattle into the United States. Consequently, the job of Angus breed association secretary was defined, and redefined, by those who served in the position.

### First to take the reins

Charles Gudgell was the first secretary of the new American Aberdeen-Angus Breeders' Association, which was chartered in 1883. Born in Bath, Ky., in 1847, he and his brother inherited a farm near Pleasant Hill, Mo., after their father's untimely death. They moved to the Missouri farm in 1870, along with their guardian, Thomas Simpson, to engage in cattle ranching. The brothers soon split, and Gudgell and Simpson formed the partnership that was to play a large role in the early development of both the Hereford and the Angus breeds in America.

The Gudgell and Simpson partnership began importing registered Hereford and

## ASSOCIATION TIME LINE

1873

George Grant imported first Angus to the United States



1883

American Aberdeen-Angus Breeders' Association was chartered with Charles Gudgell as secretary



1886

Published the first U.S. Aberdeen-Angus Herd Book



First office of the American Aberdeen-Angus Breeders' Association in Charles Gudgell's home in Independence, Mo.

1888

Thomas McFarlane named secretary and moved Association office to Iowa City, Iowa

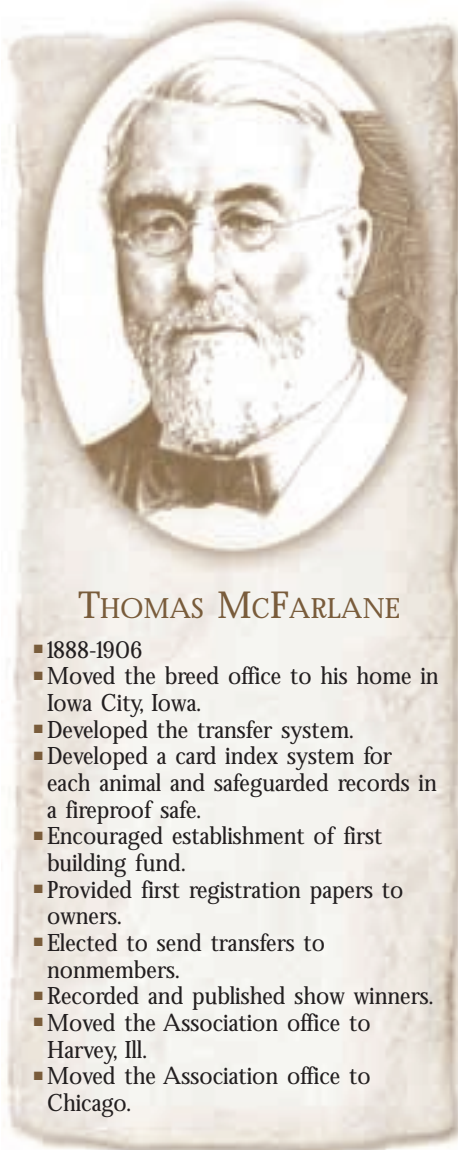


Angus. They traded cattle and established herds of both breeds. Gudgell bought a large brick home in Independence, Mo., and it became a mecca for cattlemen. He imported not only Angus cattle from Scotland, but good Scotch whiskey as well. The Scottish nectar helped warm the spirits of Gudgell's guests. His place was popular with those who attended the Kansas City Fat Stock Show.

Gudgell helped organize the American Aberdeen-Angus Breeders' Association and was elected its first secretary. He was also the first secretary of the Hereford Association. The offices for both breeds were in his home. His primary job was collecting information for the first volume of the U.S. Aberdeen-Angus Herd Book. Entries for the Herd Book were closed on March 1, 1885, and the first books came off the press in June the following year. Handsomely bound, the book contained 5,200 entries, of which 2,250 were animals owned by American breeders. The remainder of the entries were the Scottish ancestors of the American Angus.

The Herd Book was at the core of beef cattle breeding. It listed the name and registration number of every animal registered, along with the sire and dam and their registration numbers, and the name of the breeder if it was different from the first owner. With this first Herd Book, and with subsequent ones, breeders could keep track of ancestry and make intelligent breeding decisions. Herd books were issued on a regular basis until 1962, when Association records were computerized.

Gudgell soon concluded he was too busy to run the Association, and in 1887 he submitted his resignation. The Board persuaded him to stay on for a while. In January 1888, at a meeting in Kansas City, they accepted his resignation and named Thomas McFarlane, Iowa City, Iowa, as the second Association secretary. McFarlane immediately moved the offices to his Iowa City home.



- THOMAS MCFARLANE**
- 1888-1906
  - Moved the breed office to his home in Iowa City, Iowa.
  - Developed the transfer system.
  - Developed a card index system for each animal and safeguarded records in a fireproof safe.
  - Encouraged establishment of first building fund.
  - Provided first registration papers to owners.
  - Elected to send transfers to nonmembers.
  - Recorded and published show winners.
  - Moved the Association office to Harvey, Ill.
  - Moved the Association office to Chicago.

#### A move to Iowa

McFarlane was born in York Mills, N.Y., in 1835, the son of native Scottish parents. Trained as a machinist, he became an important stockholder in a manufacturing company in Providence, R.I. In the 1880s he moved his family to Iowa City to become a farmer and a stockman. He was captivated by the Angus breed and became a pioneer

breeder of Aberdeen-Angus cattle.

At 53 years of age, McFarlane probably had no intention of starting a third career. But he served for 19 years — the second-longest term in Association history. McFarlane's successful career in business and his interest in Angus cattle made him a natural to replace Gudgell and to guide the early years of the Association.

His knowledge of business and recordkeeping were the two outstanding skills he brought to the office, along with integrity, dignity and admiration of Angus cattle. In one tribute McFarlane was described as "... a high-minded, dignified gentleman of the old school who never stooped to an unworthy or questionable act himself, or excused or justified it in another."

McFarlane developed the transfer system to record changes in ownership of registered Angus. He kept lists of the progeny of all bulls and cows. He developed a card index system for each animal and safeguarded these records in a fireproof safe. He longed for the Association to have its own building and encouraged the establishment of the Association's first building fund.

Later he and the Board set up a system that provided a registration paper to the owner of an animal. Prior to that, the registration certificate was kept by the Association, and the owner had no official record. At the same time they also elected to send transfers to nonmembers.

What's more, McFarlane kept records of show winnings and published the results in pamphlets and circulars, the Association's first efforts at breed promotion. He later used the outstanding sales record of finished Angus cattle at the Chicago market to promote the breed. Most of his work was groundbreaking; there was no model for him to follow.

#### A new home

Within three years it became evident the Association offices could not be housed in

1890

Moved Association office to Harvey, Ill.

1902

Association moved to the Live Stock Records Building in Chicago, Ill.



1906

Charles Gray named secretary



1910

First advertising and promotion campaign

1918

Hired assistant secretary to specialize in advertising and publicity

1919

First Herdsman's Banquet at the International Livestock Exposition

his home. At age 55 McFarlane sold his Angus herd and moved his family and the Association headquarters to Harvey, Ill., a small town about 15 miles south of the Chicago Union Stockyards. In 1902 McFarlane moved the Association offices to the new Live Stock Records Building in the stockyards, which had been built by the Union Stockyards Co.

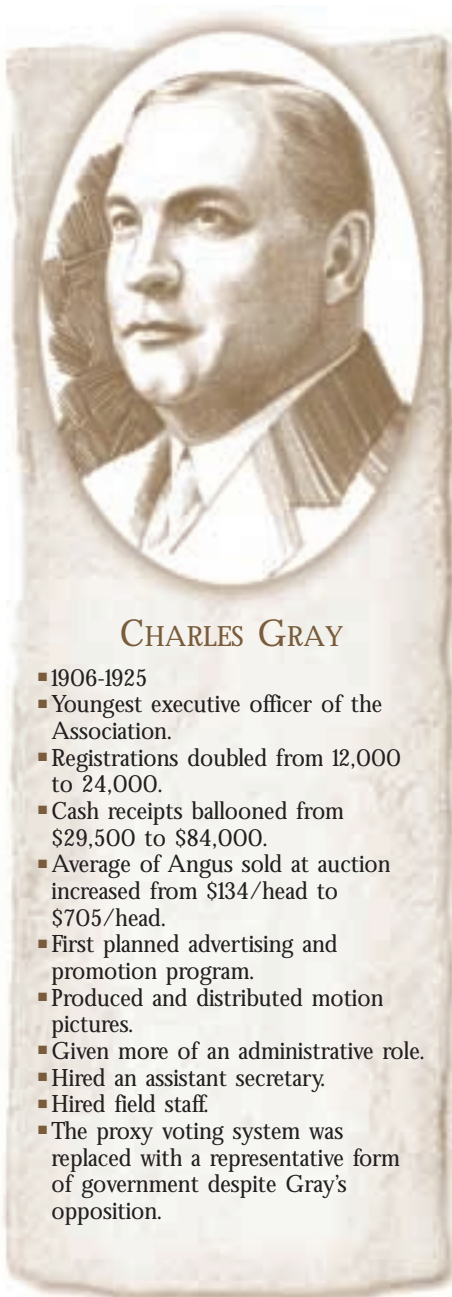
For 19 years McFarlane set the standards for a breed association executive. At the 1906 Annual Meeting, the Association's annual budget totaled some \$26,000, with cash reserves of \$23,000 and a building fund of \$18,000.

He was 72 years old at the Dec. 5, 1906, Board Meeting that followed the Annual Meeting. There's no record of whether McFarlane had expressed an interest in retiring. Nevertheless, both he and Charles Gray, the young secretary of the Galloway Association, were nominated for the Angus job. Gray won the vote 5 to 4, and the McFarlane era came to an end.

**Boom and bust**

Gray brought youth and enthusiasm to the American Aberdeen-Angus Breeders' Association. A true son of the old sod, he was born in Aberdeenshire, Scotland, in 1877 and moved to Canada with his parents while still a small boy. He worked at a stock farm near Sioux City, Iowa; then he enrolled at Iowa State College (now Iowa State University). He earned a bachelor's degree in 1904, and later a master's degree.

Gray was an excellent cattle judge. He won the prestigious Spoor trophy at the International Live Stock Exposition in 1902. He was asked to judge many livestock shows while still an undergraduate. When he graduated at 27 years of age, he was hired as secretary of the Galloway Breeders' Association. Less than four years later, at age



**CHARLES GRAY**

- 1906-1925
- Youngest executive officer of the Association.
- Registrations doubled from 12,000 to 24,000.
- Cash receipts ballooned from \$29,500 to \$84,000.
- Average of Angus sold at auction increased from \$134/head to \$705/head.
- First planned advertising and promotion program.
- Produced and distributed motion pictures.
- Given more of an administrative role.
- Hired an assistant secretary.
- Hired field staff.
- The proxy voting system was replaced with a representative form of government despite Gray's opposition.

31, he became the youngest executive officer to ever serve the Angus Association.

For the next 14 years Charles Gray and the Association blazed new trails in beef cattle association work. From 1907 to 1920, registrations doubled from just less than 12,000 to more than 24,000. Cash receipts ballooned from \$29,500 to nearly \$84,000. The average price of Angus sold at auction went from \$134/head to \$705/head in 1920, a record that wasn't surpassed until 1951.

Gray was a promoter, and he put together the Association's first planned advertising and promotion program. He placed advertisements in the top agricultural publications, including *La Hacienda*, a Spanish-language publication circulated in Central and South America. Motion pictures were produced and distributed to interested parties. Gray described the Association's advertising and promotion program in his master's thesis submitted to Iowa State College in 1916.

Recognizing Gray's talents, the Board allowed him to be more of an administrator and to make many decisions on his own. He was allowed to travel, for example, to anywhere he wanted, for whatever purpose, as long as he stayed within his travel budget. Prior to this, the Board or the Executive Committee had authorized virtually every trip and every expenditure.

Gray recommended, and the Board approved, the hiring of an assistant secretary to be in charge of publicity and advertising. He was also to work with the *Angus Journal*, which was founded in 1919 by Fred Hahne, a Webster City, Iowa, printer. The assistant secretary also organized the first Herdsman's Banquet at the International Livestock Exposition.

A field staff that eventually totaled four men was put into place, although they remained under the supervision of the

**ASSOCIATION TIME LINE**



**Blackcap Poe 205921** — Highest-priced bull ever sold up to that time. Brought \$9,200 paid by A.D. Wilcox, Muscotah, Kan., from Esehart & Ryan Sale on June 5, 1918, in Harlan, Iowa.

1915

Hired first fieldman, M.A. Judy from Iowa.

1921

Agricultural recession hit, bringing many Association programs to an end

1924

Proxy voting system replaced with representative form of government

1925

W.H. Tomhave hired



Board of Directors, not Gray. These men spent a good deal of their time strengthening the tie between Angus and young cattle enthusiasts. In some ways it was the Association's first junior activities program. They also worked to organize state Angus associations and state and local Angus sales to help merchandise bulls and females.

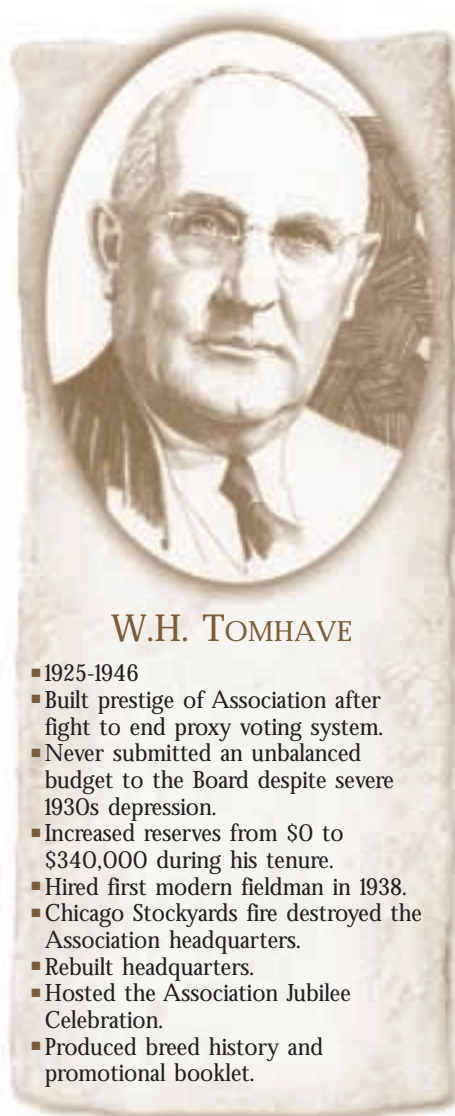
The agricultural recession that hit in 1921 eventually brought most of these programs to an end and wiped out the Association's reserves and building fund. But financial problems didn't end Gray's career with the Association. Politics did that.

For years many members had been highly critical of the proxy system of voting used at the Annual Meeting. Under this system, two or three people often had enough proxies to outvote the 100-200 members in attendance. Gray worked for and under a Board that was elected by these proxy holders, and he chose to support these Association leaders, thus supporting the proxy system.

In 1923 a program was initiated by a "progressive" group of members to install a representative form of government. The program was strongly, sometimes illegally, resisted by the people in power. The progressives prevailed in 1924, and in 1925 Gray was forced to retire to his 325-acre farm near Glen Ellyn, Ill. He died there in 1938 from injuries suffered in an automobile accident two years earlier.

### Calming the waters

The long, drawn-out court battle over how the Association should be governed left many members distrustful of the Association, even distrustful of each other. The unfavorable publicity left many cattlemen wondering if they really wanted to be a member of the organization, even



W.H. TOMHAVE

- 1925-1946
- Built prestige of Association after fight to end proxy voting system.
- Never submitted an unbalanced budget to the Board despite severe 1930s depression.
- Increased reserves from \$0 to \$340,000 during his tenure.
- Hired first modern fieldman in 1938.
- Chicago Stockyards fire destroyed the Association headquarters.
- Rebuilt headquarters.
- Hosted the Association Jubilee Celebration.
- Produced breed history and promotional booklet.

though Angus cattle were gaining in popularity and were bringing top prices at Chicago and other cattle markets.

The Association needed a strong, trusted, dignified leader who could gain the confidence of the beef cattle world and shift

the emphasis back to breeding and marketing Aberdeen-Angus cattle and away from politics.

More than 50 individuals applied for the Angus job, a nightmare for the sifting (search) committee. Finally, in August 1925, the committee recommended that the job go to W.H. Tomhave, the head of the Animal Science Department at Pennsylvania State University. Some media accounts of Tomhave's hiring expressed surprise that he would accept the job of running the troubled Association.

Born in Fergus Falls, Minn., in 1881, Tomhave earned his animal husbandry degree from the University of Minnesota in 1907. He worked briefly at the university before moving to Manchuria, China, to serve in the Chinese government's livestock development bureau. Two years later he returned to head the Penn State animal husbandry department.

At the time he joined the Association, his book, *Meat and Meat Products*, was being published. It became a popular student textbook and a source of information for cattle producers.

Tomhave was a tall, outgoing gentleman who reportedly made friends easily. One observer remembers him as mild-mannered and soft-spoken, one who never got "riled." He was a popular speaker at both Angus and all-breed cattle events and served on many beef industry committees. During the next 21 years, the longest tenure of any Association executive officer, he made the Association one of the most respected in the industry.

Indeed, for several years it looked as if Tomhave and the membership had corrected the Association's course. Prices improved, and registrations increased. But it was not to last. Following the 1929 stock market crash, the cattle business began to



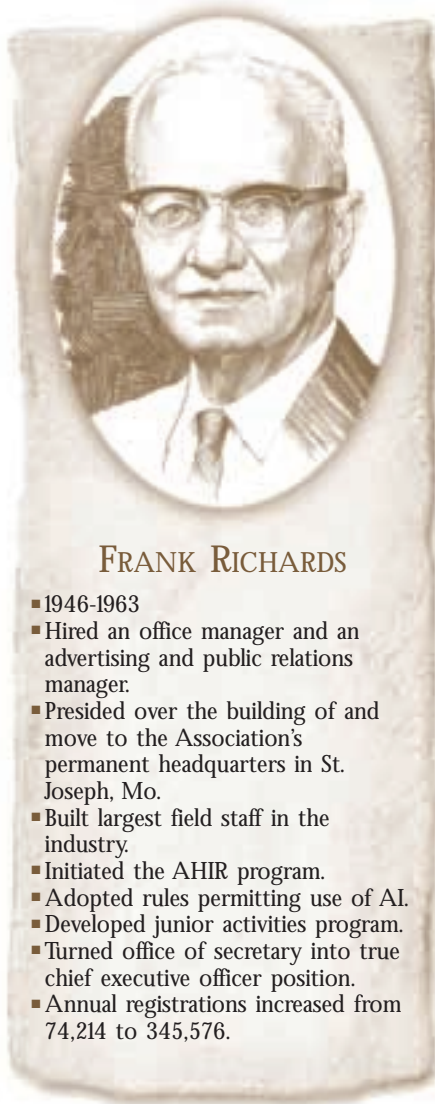
fall apart with the rest of the economy. In 1933 only 14 Angus auctions were conducted in the United States, and the average price was a meager \$92.30/head.

Through it all Tomhave prevailed. At one point he took a big cut in pay in order to balance the budget. He never submitted an unbalanced budget to the Board. In fact, he increased the Association reserves from nothing when he accepted the job to more than \$340,000 when he retired in 1946.

He worked, for the most part, with no assistance other than the employees who processed membership, registration and transfer information. It wasn't until 1938 that a fieldman was hired to help with the growing demand on his time to attend shows, sales, field days and other Angus events.

In 1934 Tomhave was forced to deal with another disaster, the great Chicago Stockyards fire. The Sunday morning blaze destroyed much of the stockyards, including the Live Stock Records Building, home of the Association. Everything went up in flames except the records that were kept in a fireproof safe. Within a week or so, the Association was back in business, even while the offices were being rebuilt around the office workers. The Amphitheater was rebuilt, and the Association's Jubilee Celebration, which Tomhave had worked so hard to plan, was held in November as scheduled.

There was little money for promotion, but Tomhave made the best of what he had. He completed a breed history and a promotional booklet for the Jubilee Celebration. He used advertising whenever possible. The ads featured Angus interbreed-show winnings and the fact that Angus usually brought top prices at the major terminal markets around the country. He also made many radio



FRANK RICHARDS

- 1946-1963
- Hired an office manager and an advertising and public relations manager.
- Presided over the building of and move to the Association's permanent headquarters in St. Joseph, Mo.
- Built largest field staff in the industry.
- Initiated the AHIR program.
- Adopted rules permitting use of AI.
- Developed junior activities program.
- Turned office of secretary into true chief executive officer position.
- Annual registrations increased from 74,214 to 345,576.

broadcasts and wrote widely used articles on the beef cattle business.

After years of making do, Tomhave was probably unprepared for the Angus growth that began in the late 1930s. In 1936 registrations totaled just more than 15,000

head, and there were only 30 auction sales, which averaged \$161/head. When he retired at the end of the 1946 fiscal year, annual registrations totaled more than 74,000 head and there had been 166 auction sales that averaged \$530/head.




Some members were becoming dissatisfied, calling for more Association services and more promotion. What's more, the *Aberdeen-Angus Journal* was in conflict with the Association, particularly with many on the Board of Directors. Growth, it was obvious, was going to force many changes in the Angus business and in the Association. New leadership was needed, and Tomhave recognized it. He announced his retirement in March 1946, to take effect at the end of the fiscal year. Within a few months, Frank Richards was hired to replace him.

**Time to restructure**

Richards, like Tomhave, was the right man for the times. The Association needed organization, restructuring and new programs. The Angus breed needed professional promotion and advertising and an enthusiastic leader. Richards, by temperament, training and experience, was the man who could provide all these. All the foundations for the American Angus Association, as we see it at the end of the 20th century, virtually were laid during Richards' administration from 1946 to 1963.

Richards grew up on a farm near Bevier, Mo. He graduated from the University of Missouri in 1919 with a bachelor's degree in animal husbandry. He was a campus leader and an honors student. After graduation he returned home as a partner in J.F. Richards and Son, a farm operation and producer of purebred Poland China hogs and Shorthorn cattle. During the Depression he left the farm to work as a fieldman in the eastern

**ASSOCIATION TIME LINE**

	<p>1946</p> <p>Tomhave announced retirement; Frank Richards hired as successor</p>		<p>1950</p> <p>First rules concerning artificial insemination</p>		<p>1956</p> <p>Moved office to St. Joseph, Mo.</p>
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United States for the *Chicago Daily Drovers Journal*, a member of the Corn Belt Farm Dailies. For a brief time he managed Bethel Farm, Pine Plains, N.Y.; then he returned to the Corn Belt Dailies as editor, then general manager, of the daily market newsletter, *The Kansas City Daily Drovers Telegram*.

Richards asked for three things before coming to work — a three-year commitment from the Board, the authority to hire immediately an office manager (registrar) and an advertising and public relations manager.

A.R. “Al” Birmingham became the new registrar. With Richards’ encouragement and support, he automated the office’s recordkeeping. Lloyd Miller was hired that same year as director of publicity. Miller established an award-winning public relations and advertising program that continues to this day.

From the beginning of his administration, Richards knew that the offices in the Live Stock Records Building were too small and outdated. He presided over the building of and, in 1956, the move to the Association’s first permanent home at 3201 Frederick Ave. in St. Joseph, Mo. The official name was changed from American Aberdeen-Angus Breeders’ Association to simply the American Angus Association at the time of the move from Chicago to St. Joseph.

Richards was not completely convinced early on that the Association should leave the Chicago Stockyards and the home of the International Live Stock Exposition, even though many believed he was a major force in moving to his home state of Missouri.

Richards was a people person who believed that personal service to members was vital. He built a field staff, the largest in the industry, to work directly with members. From the time the Association

moved to St. Joseph until Richards retired in 1963, his field staff remained virtually unchanged, a tribute to his fairness and leadership ability.

One of the most far-reaching programs initiated under Richards’ administration was the Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR) program. Keeping weaning and yearling weight records was, in the eyes of most cattle producers, a foreign and unproven management system. It was certainly not a popular thing to do at the time. Virtually every Board member in the 1950s was of the old school and saw shows and the “eye” of the breeder as the most important breed-improvement tools.

Still, the program was initiated in 1958 because it was the right thing to do. Today it is the largest such beef cattle records program in the world, one that literally has revolutionized the way beef cattle are selected and bred.

The Association’s first artificial insemination (AI) rules were adopted in May 1950. They provided that registration of AI-sired animals would be allowed only when the sire and dam were both owned by the breeder. It would be another 22 years before open AI rules would be adopted, opening the door to a practice that had a profound effect upon the Angus breed.

Richards was instrumental in starting an official junior activities program. In 1956 he obtained permission to hire the first full-time staff member to work with young people. At the time, that person was considered a specialized member of the field staff. A few years later, the position was turned into a full-time director of junior activities. The program has continued to grow.

Maybe most important of all, Richards turned the job of breed association secretary into a chief executive officer

position. Before Richards came on board, even small expenditures, such as the money to print a piece of promotional literature, had to be approved by the Board of Directors. Richards convinced the Board to set policy and approve a budget, then allow him to manage both personnel and spending within that framework. Prior to this, staff hiring always was approved, and often conducted, by the Board or at least the Executive Committee.

The most spectacular aspect of his tenure was the constant, rapid growth of the Association. When he was hired in 1946, registrations totaled 74,214. When he retired at the end of the 1963 fiscal year, they totaled 345,576. The Association’s first computer was installed in 1962 in order to handle the increasing registration workload. No secretary, before or since, has experienced Angus Association expansion of this magnitude.

In 1962 Richards was 64 years old and not in especially good health. Traveling was no longer the joy it had been for most of his career, and the breed association business was again changing rapidly. Richards concluded that the Association should be handled by someone with more youth and energy. He announced at the 1962 Annual Meeting that he would retire at the end of the 1963 fiscal year. **AJ**

**Editor’s Note:** See the August issue for Part 2 of “The Faces of the American Angus Association.”

*Keith Evans, former director of communications and public relations, is in the process of writing a book featuring the history of the American Angus Association.*

1956  
Changed name to the American Angus Association

1956  
Hired first full-time person to work with junior members

1958  
AHIR initiated

1962  
Association records computerized



1963  
Frank Richards retired; Glen Bratcher hired

