

# Grit and Gratitude

*David Gazda was recognized for his service and dedication to the livestock industry.*

*by Megan Silveira, assistant editor*

The sights and sounds of a livestock auction are known by many, but they hold a special place in the heart of livestock fieldmen, auctioneers, sale managers and related livestock business leaders.



A new face joined the elite rankings of the individuals in the field June 15 when David Gazda, American Angus Association director of field services and regional manager, was inducted into the Livestock Marketeers Hall of Fame.

The Livestock Marketeers is an informal fraternity of livestock professionals. They hosted their 56<sup>th</sup> Annual Banquet in Saint Joseph, Mo., where Gazda was recognized.

## Going Angus

Upon graduating from high school, Gazda formed his first ties to the Business Breed when he purchased a few Angus cows alongside his father. Gazda says his father always had in his mind he wanted to own Angus cattle, and his love of the breed rubbed off on his son.

The family herd was Gazda's first exposure to the breed, and while he expressed a love for the cattle, his career took him to varying sectors of the agriculture industry. Past positions include managing a three-species unit at Stephen F. Austin (SFA) State University and holding a position at Quercus Farms.

Life eventually led Gazda and his wife, Carolyn, back to Athens, Ga. After the return to his home state, Gazda's mother mentioned in passing that the regional manager position with the American Angus Association for the area was opening up.

"That position had always intrigued me," he recalls. "To travel for the Association, see good cattle throughout the region, be able to visit with producers and youth, and help people enter the Angus business — it was just a job to me that was really attractive."

Despite feeling personally defeated after slipping in a résumé past the application deadline and giving an interview he says didn't live up to his own standards, Gazda was offered the regional manager position for the states of Georgia, North Carolina,



David Gazda (center) was inducted into the Livestock Marketeers Hall of Fame. Also pictured are Church Grove (left) American Angus Association Board of Directors, and Jerry Cassady (right), director of member services.

South Carolina and Florida in 1988.

“I was totally convinced I had wasted their time, and I wasted my time,” he says, laughing at the memory.

After more than 30 years now spent in the role, Gazda clearly couldn't have been more mistaken. Today he manages the entire team of , regional managers and is the longest-standing member of the current group. Today, Gazda's territory includes Florida, Georgia and South Carolina.

As the years went by, Gazda's love for the Angus breed became infectious, spreading to the rest of the Gazda clan. He and his wife raised their two daughters, Katie and Taylor, in the industry. The newest Angus enthusiast in the family is their grandson, David Hudson Stipe.

## Great and deserving

“David was recognized as an inductee for the Livestock Marketeers Hall of Fame due to his exceptional passion for the Angus breed and its membership, his willingness to help members of every size and scope, and his

professionalism in advancing the interests of the Angus breed,” says Brett Spader, Angus Media president and member of the Livestock Marketeers.

Spader says Gazda is a true role model to fellow livestock marketing professionals, as he selflessly serves cattle producers and pushes the entire cattle industry forward.

The Livestock Marketeers is a group Gazda says he admires, and he was humbled and honored to have been added to the rankings of individuals in the Hall of Fame.

“A lot of those guys were mentors to me and people I hold in high regard,” he explains. “It was one of those things where you never really dream you would be included in a group like that. For me to have received that honor by my peers was very special.”

Like his younger self, Gazda says he still believes the role he holds as a regional manager is one of the best jobs in the country. He says the role was the foundation for so much of

his story within the Business Breed.

“There's no better position for someone who wants to be in the livestock industry,” Gazda says. “The only way I've been able to do what I have done is through faith, family and friends. That's what is really responsible for having brought me through the last 33 years.” [AJ](#)



Top right: Gazda currently serves the regions of Florida, Georgia and South Carolina..

Bottom right: Gazda has served the Angus industry for more than 30 years.

Bottom left: Gazda (pictured from left) raised his two daughters, Katie and Taylor, in the Business Breed with his wife, Carolyn.