

# Education Takes a Twist in Summer

*Teachers Offer Practical Lessons as Junior Advisors*

Dick Baylor has a framed adage in his home: "The best three reasons for teaching school are June, July and August."

Nothing could ring more true for school teacher/Angus breeders who have served as advisors in Junior Angus Association activities in Illinois. Although it may seem unusual for so many educators to slot these roles, past and present advisors say it's a natural fit. They spend summers away from the classroom — the time of the year when junior Angus activities are most frequent.

"Both roles allow me to work with kids. In the summer, I'm not confined to a work schedule and I can be at the shows helping out," says Coleen Morris, Congerville, Ill., Illinois Junior Angus Association advisor. She and husband, Jim, have served the organization for six years.

"Teaching school and advising juniors in the Angus business really aren't separate entities," she continues. "Both are developmental processes. It's very gratifying to be involved."

Previous Illinois advisor Dick Baylor of Hanna City, Ill., agrees. "I don't teach school to get rich. I do it because I like working with kids," he says. "That's the same reason I enjoyed my time with the Illinois Junior Angus Association."

Ironically, two of the three couples

that currently serve as advisors to the Southern Illinois Junior Angus Association are also school teachers — Pat and Jane Henry, Pittsburg, Ill., and Larry and Judy Davis, Creal Springs, Ill. The Davises also feel their dual roles complement each other well.

"I think we understand kids, and how to respond to their needs because Judy and I are teachers," Larry says. "Everything we do with the Angus kids is done from an educational standpoint. We try and set examples and provide encouragement."

Although reasons for their involvement with the junior program are similar, each of these teachers brings different classroom experience to the table. Coleen Morris has taught for 16 years. She is currently providing education to first graders in rural Goodfield. At the other end of the spectrum, Dick Baylor is a 33-year veteran of high school industrial arts instruction in Bartonville and rarely crosses paths in the hall with kids from rural backgrounds. Both Larry and Judy Davis are 20-plus year teachers at Crab Orchard School, a rural kindergarten through high school system near Marion. Larry teaches sixth grade, while wife Judy instructs third graders.

Despite their varied teaching backgrounds and experience, Morris observes how old students or Angus enthusiasts are irrelevant to the basic lesson structure.

"Regardless of age, kids need to set goals. Even first graders can set goals," she says. "Providing kids with a set of building blocks is the beginning of the process. By the time they leave high school, they should use those building blocks to reach a different realm of the decision-making process."

Baylor uses comparable thinking in his lesson plans. As a junior advisor, he applied his classroom psychology of learning and understanding with kids of all ages.

"Many parents get understandably excited at shows. As an advisor, I provided an impartial view. I was calm, listened to what kids wanted and helped them learn," he explains. "I don't have all the answers, but certainly as an advisor, you can help develop leadership skills and provide direction in handling people and competition."

BY BARBARA BAYLOR ANDERSON



*Coleen and Jim Morris of Illinois consult with NJAA leaders at a National Junior Angus Show.*

Classrooms and textbooks may supply background for learning life's fundamentals, Baylor adds, but involvement with junior association activities provides practical experience beyond school year academics. Among other things, young Angus leaders learn to conduct meetings properly, handle organization finances and work with others in a democratic setting.

And helping kids get to that level of young adult learning is where all of these Illinois advisors agree they have received gratification. Watching nervous youngsters enter the show ring for the first time, get involved with the Angus program and mature into responsible, young leaders is the advisor's reward.

"Kids generally get active in the Angus business before they become teenagers. It's great to watch them grow through the process and become responsible adults," Morris says. "It really makes you feel you've done something worthwhile."

Larry Davis, who has helped advise the southern Illinois group for nearly 16 years, concurs. "We claim these kids from now on. We're interested in their lives and enjoy it when they come to visit with us at school or at an Angus show. We like to meet their families and know what they're doing."

But these teachers also know that providing knowledge to students of any discipline is only as useful as those students choose to make it. Davis adds that's one of the values of working as a volunteer with the association. Illinois juniors generally have an overall positive attitude about their extracurricular activities, he says, versus children in mandatory classroom settings.

"Kids in the Angus business listen to what you have to say," he says. "They want to be here, they are cooperative and they take responsibility for their activities."

Baylor says attitude makes working with tomorrow's Angus leaders a pleasure. However, he also concludes advisors, just like teachers and parents, need to know when to take a step back and provide the ultimate gift of education.

"You have to know when to let the kids go. You can provide guidance, but you also have to impress upon parents the beauty in watching their children mature and get tremendous hands-on life experience in the Angus business. I've always had faith in kids, and I've never been disappointed with the outcome." AJ



*Dick Baylor believes advisors should provide junior members direction in handling people and competition.*

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### **State Junior Advisors Give Guidance**

Becoming an advisor in the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) enables adults throughout the United States to share a common interest with youth.

The advisor position can be filled by both interested adults in the NJAA or parents. "Junior members usually have a pretty good feeling for who is supportive and how things will work out with their junior advisor," says James Fisher, director of junior activities.

In some states advisors are elected by junior members; others are elected by the adult board within their state. "It seems to work out the best when the junior members elect their own advisor," Fisher says. "The thing that drives adults is their interest in the junior program and their belief in the programs. If they are interested in the junior program more than likely they will do more."

In some states whoever is willing to take the responsibility and has an interest fills the advisor's shoes. In many states advisors are arranged in rotation. Two or three couples serve as advisors and work together over a three-year period. They become involved the first year and assume more responsibility the second year; the third year they take over as the junior advisor.

Junior advisors are provided with a junior handbook, and information updating them on national programs and activities. "Interested adults need to make it known to junior members. Those that are truly interested make the best advisors," Fisher says.

"Being a good advisor is caring about the juniors and helping, but not necessarily doing it for them. The biggest benefit one can gain from being a junior advisor is the gratitude of seeing the kids grow and change."