

A Special Tribute to Carlton & Geneva Corbin

by DAVE NICHOLS

I first met Carlton Corbin over 30 years ago, at a bull test station at Schuyler, Neb., where his bull, Emulous Para, had set a new world record for gain on test. I was young and had never been to a bull test. No one at this event knew me, or even cared, except for Carlton Corbin.

We went through the pens of bulls and talked about performance testing, carcass merit, feed conversion and the changing face of the cattle business. I was so naive, or as my dad would say, "still wet behind the ears," that I didn't realize I was wasting the time of one of the giants of the beef industry.

Carlton Wallace Corbin was born in 1907 and spent his entire life raising cattle. The cattle industry dodged a bullet when a young Carlton Corbin read a newspaper clipping about Oklahoma A&M winning the national livestock judging team contest in Chicago. Carlton had planned on enrolling in pre-law and becoming a lawyer. Instead he enrolled at A&M and indeed became a member of the judging team which won the national contest in 1928. While no one who knew Carlton would ever doubt his ability as a lawyer, the loss to the cattle industry would have been immeasurable.

He earned a master's degree at Iowa State College and had a \$1 a day scholarship. Carlton chuckled to me years later, \$1 a day in 1930 was like gold falling out of the sky. He became friends and worked with Dr. Jay Lush, a professor who is to population genetics what Einstein is to physics.

Carlton told me the story of Dr. Lush taking a different grad student in his car every Saturday to observe and discuss the populations of animals. Dr. Lush though brilliant, was terrified of anything mechanical and had his students do the driving. With Dr. Lush in the back seat, on a remote road, Carlton switched the car off, causing it to buck, backfire and stop. Dr. Lush inquired if the young Oklahoman knew anything about mechanics. Carlton assured him he could fix it and promptly stuck his head under the hood. In due time he got back in the driver's seat and proclaimed he had fixed the car. From that day on, Carlton Corbin was Dr. Lush's driver.

From Iowa State, Carlton went to Washington State as judging team coach in 1930 and 1931. His father died in a car accident and in the midst of the Depression, Carlton returned to his roots in Oklahomatoraise, breed and sell cattle.

His ability to recognize the needs of the future and the ideas which sprang from his fertile mind, cast him in leadership roles in new beef organizations, such as central bull test stations and Performance Registry International.

He helped write the guidelines for the Brangus breed and served as its first executive secretary. In the meantime, his linebred Emulous cattle were utilized by serious cattlemen everywhere. They continued to set records at test stations, dominate certified meat sire programs, and became the basis for many

herds, including mine. The influence of the Emulous cattle is so widespread in the Angus breed, few cattle remain without a shot of Emulous in their bloodlines.

Carlton's ability to conceive ideas, and transfer them to the real world are legend and may never be repeated. His office walls are not large enough to display the awards he achieved, not the least of which is the National Beef Improvement's Seedstock Producer of the Year. Carlton's greatest achievement, in my opinion, was his ideas and his ability to communicate them to scores of others. He once told me, "The most fragile thing in the world is a new idea in a room full of successful cattlemen."

Carlton married Geneva in 1966. The term "dream team" is frequently used today to describe athletic teams. Those who knew Carlton and Geneva know that they are truly the dream team. Geneva was a successful cattle rancher herself and understood the business. They met when she came to a Stoneybroke sale in search of an Angus bull. Her insights and skill with people added another layer on the Stoneybroke Ranch's cake of success.

Geneva and Carlton lived for each other. Their love and support for each other are truly models for humanity. Love is not divisible, their love and respect for each other never diminished either of them from pouring out love for their friends and families. Geneva added to the success of Stoneybroke Ranch. Their Emulous genetics have spread across the whole world. My experiences with these people are not unique. The joining of these two great people realize in a sum greater than its parts.

My best friends just passed away.

Their going prompts me to say.

Now is not the time to be sad

Nor is it the time to be glad.

Rather now is the time to understand

Now is the time to ask God to make me more like this Woman and Man.

Funeral services were held June 12 for Mr. and Mrs. Corbin at the First Methodist Church, Ada, Okla. Carlton was 88 and Geneva 83 years old at the time of their death. They were active members of the Oklahoma and American Angus Associations. He was selected as Master Breeder by both Oklahoma State University and the American Angus Association.

They are survived by children, Virginia "Tony" Corbin Flowers, Carlton W. "Bill" Jr., Mary Corbin Westhoff, and five grandchildren.

Memorials may be made to the Carlton & Geneva Corbin Memorial Fund, c/o Angus Foundation, 3201 Frederick Blvd., St. Joseph, MO 64506. This fund will be directed toward National Junior Angus Association activities.

