

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. We complete our look at the history of the Association by examining the tenures of Glen Bratcher, Lloyd Miller, C.K. Allen and Richard Spader, the current executive vice president.

PART 2 OF 2

BY KEITH EVANS



The first 80 years of the national Angus breeders organization in America was a tumultuous ride, but the fledgling association grew. Five executive officers can be credited with steering the American Angus Association through economic depression, natural disaster and political unrest in the early days.

Those men were not only charged with executing the policies of the Board of Directors and handling day-to-day management of the Association office, but they were the “face” of the organization to its own members and to the beef industry at large.

In 1962 Frank Richards, the Association’s fifth executive officer, was 64 years old and not in especially good health. With the breed association business going through yet another rapid change, he concluded that the Association should be handled by someone with more youth and energy.

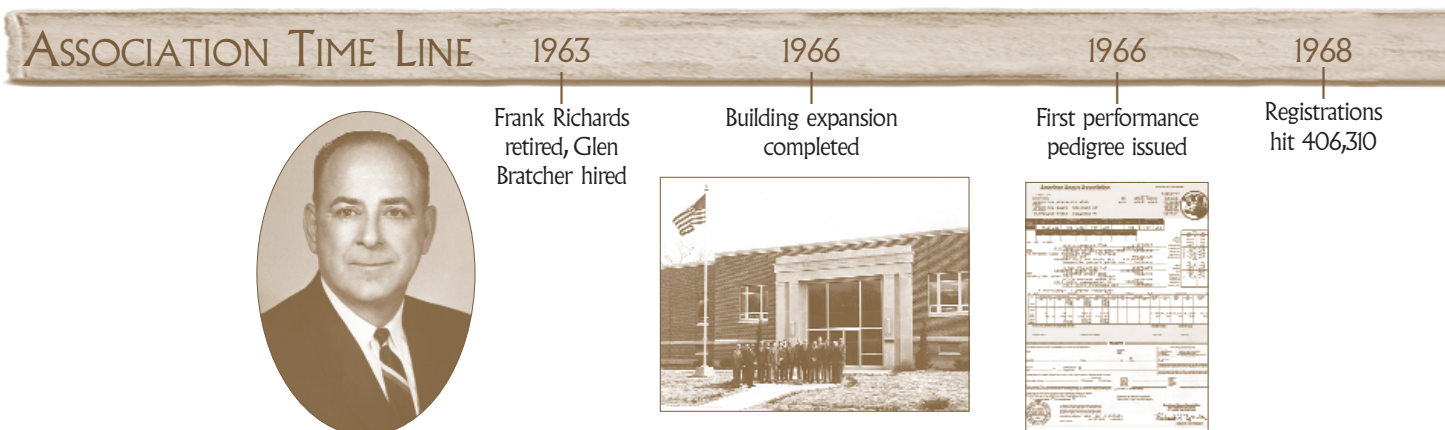
He announced at the 1962 Annual Meeting that he would retire at the end of the 1963 fiscal year. The ninth decade of Angus in America would be introduced by someone new.

Only so much time

The job of Association secretary was a plum that many people wanted to pick. After sorting through a pile of applications and interviewing approximately 15 candidates, the Board contacted Glen Bratcher, head of the animal science department at Oklahoma State University. They hired this likable and popular educator to be the sixth secretary of the American Angus Association.

A native of Oklahoma, Bratcher was a 1940 graduate of Oklahoma A&M University (later to be Oklahoma State). He, like Richards, was an honors student and president of the student association. A few months after graduating in 1941, Bratcher was appointed to the staff of Oklahoma State, where he completed his master’s degree. He served as a U.S. Navy officer in the South Pacific from 1942 to 1946, then returned to the university staff as livestock judging coach.

During the next six years, his teams won first-place honors at the International Livestock Exposition in Chicago, the American Royal in Kansas City and the Southwestern Livestock Exposition in Fort



Worth. He was appointed to head the animal husbandry department in 1953. Angus people had come to know him as one of the most respected beef cattle judges in America. He judged the Angus show at the International twice and the All-American Aberdeen-Angus Futurity four times, plus numerous state-fair Angus shows.

This extensive background came with Bratcher when he stepped into his new position.

The growth of the Association, particularly in staff positions, was putting stress on its “new” building. Bratcher almost immediately spearheaded a building expansion that increased the square footage by 50%. Nine new offices were added, along with a new, larger Board room. A new entrance was built to face west toward Brookside Drive. Bratcher personally oversaw much of the construction and redecorating. The project was completed in 1966.

The AHIR program was beginning to gain more acceptance. Bratcher, an educator, worked both personally and with his staff to increase the use of the program. In 1966 the first performance pedigree was issued. That year 18,000 weaning and yearling weights were processed — a drop in the bucket by 1999 standards, but exceptional for the time.

The famous cattle judge from Oklahoma had little time to serve the Angus breed. Bratcher died of a heart attack in October 1968, less than five years after he was hired. With his history of heart trouble, some said the stress of the job and the demands that were being made on the office at the time contributed to his death.

In-house promotion

Another lengthy search and interview process followed. In December 1968 the Board announced that Lloyd Miller, the director of publicity, would be the person to follow Bratcher. Miller took over with the



LLOYD MILLER

- 1968-1978
- First employee to be elevated to executive secretary position.
- Exotic craze hits the States.
- “Challenge of the Future” Angus tours.
- Live cattle displays at trade shows.
- First growth and maternal EBVs calculated.
- AI rules opened.
- Hosted World Angus Forum in Kansas City.
- Centennial Celebration.
- First *Sire Evaluation Report* published.
- Photos of Angus were first used in advertising.
- Liberty Bell Sire Evaluation Contest held.
- First *Pathfinder Report* issued.
- Certified Angus Beef (CAB) Program developed.

title of executive secretary. It was the first time that an employee of the Association had been elevated to the top staff position.

Miller, a native of Andrew County, Mo., was a 1940 graduate of the University of

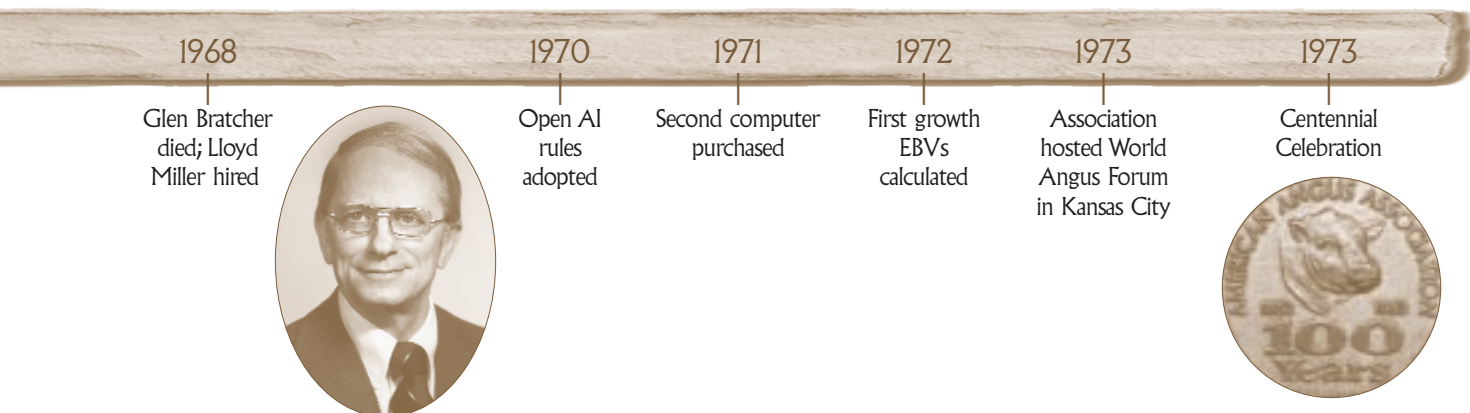
Missouri with a major in agricultural journalism and a minor in animal husbandry. In college he was editor of the *College Farmer* magazine, a student publication, and of the *Missouri Press News*, a monthly magazine of the Missouri Press Association. Following graduation he worked for the *Drovers Journal* in Chicago. After serving in the U.S. Army in the Pacific during World War II, he became assistant agricultural editor at the University of Missouri.

Miller, hired in 1946 by Frank Richards to head the Association’s advertising and public relations program, pioneered many of its publicity and public relations programs. He filmed and produced numerous motion pictures about Angus cattle and wrote and edited Angus promotional and informational books. He also built a three-person public relations staff. Over the years he was involved in international marketing of Angus cattle and led tours to a number of international Angus events. He planned and managed the Association’s national conferences.

Miller’s distinguished career as executive secretary was overshadowed by a situation over which he had little control. The beef cattle industry was in revolution, and few of the Association members, officers and directors or staff were prepared for what took place.

The rise in corporate cattle feeding, which was partially influenced by tax-shelter operations, helped place a premium on larger, faster-growing, later-maturing cattle. Although the trend at shows was shifting to larger, “growthier” cattle, many in the Angus industry either had not received the message or had failed to act upon it. To meet feeder demand, many commercial cattle producers turned to Continental-breed bulls. Charolais became an almost overnight success, and many other “exotic” breeds were to follow.

The year Bratcher died, the Association registered 406,310 head of cattle. The next



year the numbers began to drop. Before things turned around, Angus registrations bottomed out at 133,475 in 1986. Just as the president of the United States gets credit for good economic times and takes the heat for recession, regardless of the cause, much the same is true for the executive officer of the Association. Throughout the next 10 years, Miller and his staff waged a fight to put Angus back into their place of dominance, often taking heat for not moving things along fast enough.

Education was one tool to effect change in the Angus breed. National conferences brought hundreds of members together to learn more about scientific cattle production. The Association played host to the World Aberdeen-Angus Secretariat's second World Angus Forum in Kansas City in 1973 and put together an educational program that attracted international attention.

That same year a huge celebration marked the 100th anniversary of the importing of Angus into the United States and brought cattle producers and media people to the heart of Angus country. A tour of commercial Angus herds in connection with the Centennial and the World Forum showed people that many large, growthy, high-quality Angus feeder steers were already being produced.

Extra emphasis was placed on the "Challenge of the Future" Angus tours. These tours were designed to show Angus breeders what commercial cattle producers were doing to supply the feedlot industry. Angus breeders were challenged to use performance records to breed the kind of cattle that would best satisfy the needs of commercial producers.

In the 1970s the Association used trade

and farm shows to emphasize that Angus were keeping up with the times. Live displays featured registered Angus bulls, cows and calves with size, quality and outstanding performance records. Some of the shows included were the Farm Progress Show, Ohio Farm Science Review and Husker Harvest Days, as well as the National Cattlemen's Association (NCA) annual convention. The American Angus Association was the first breed association to mount this kind of display, although others would eventually follow suit.

Advertising touted the "new" Angus cattle. In 1969 national ads were dedicated strictly to the AHIR program and to the availability of performance-tested breeding cattle. In 1976 actual photos of Angus cattle were used for the first time, illustrating large, attractive Angus cattle to counteract the baby beef stereotype.

In 1972, when some were worried the Association wasn't doing enough to fight the invasion of Continental cattle, estimated breeding values (EBVs) for growth were calculated for the first time. Rules for artificial insemination (AI) were changed in 1970, eliminating most restrictions on registering cattle sired by AI even when the breeder was not an owner of the sire. The Association's second computer was purchased in 1971 primarily to handle the growing number of AHIR records being processed.

The first *Sire Evaluation Report* was published in 1974. Two years later the first maternal EBVs were calculated. In 1977 the Liberty Bell Sire Evaluation Contest was completed, putting more national emphasis on Angus cattle performance. The first *Pathfinder Report* was issued in the spring of 1978.

The Certified Angus Beef (CAB) Program was developed during the 1970s, and the first *Certified Angus Beef*™ product was sold in October 1978 in Columbus, Ohio. The fledgling program went through some tough times during its formation and early years. No one had ever seen a program like it, and many — even meats industry people — were skeptical. Furthermore, it required a substantial investment at a time when Association income was declining. It survived, then prospered, and has since shown the industry that consumers prefer and will pay more for high-quality beef.

After nearly a decade as executive secretary and 32 years as an Association staff member, Miller announced his retirement. In his farewell statement in the March 1978 *Aberdeen-Angus Journal*, Miller reflected on the fads he had seen. Angus cattle had been bred into small, blocky miniatures of their original Scottish ancestors. Concerned with the industry trend to breed extremely large Angus, he wrote in his last column in the *Aberdeen-Angus Journal*, "It makes one wonder if we might be going down another path of fads today. Or, can we be hopeful that AHIR and National Sire Evaluation will provide us enough [information] to maintain the most useful cattle no matter what size they reach at maturity?"

Short, but meaningful tenure

The search for a new leader culminated in the selection of C.K. Allen, then vice president in charge of education and research for the American Polled Hereford Association. His title would be executive vice president. Allen was the second Angus executive officer to come from another breed association.

The 35-year-old Allen was an animal

ASSOCIATION TIME LINE

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|---|--|--------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1974 | 1976 | 1976 | 1977 | 1978 | 1978 |
| First <i>Sire Evaluation Report</i> published | Photos of Angus first used for advertising | First maternal EBVs calculated | First Liberty Bell Sire Evaluation Contest completed | First <i>Pathfinder Report</i> issued | Lloyd Miller retired; C.K. Allen hired |



science graduate of Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va. He earned his master's degree and doctorate at Michigan State University, East Lansing, making him the only "doctor" to ever hold the top Angus office. His broad background in animal science and nutrition and his university research, along with six years of breed association experience, attracted the Board's attention.

Although Allen only served for three years, he helped make two lasting and important contributions to the Association. First, he headed the drive for the Association to purchase the *Aberdeen-Angus Journal* from its owners in Webster City, Iowa. The *Journal*, started in 1919 by Fred Hahne, had declined in influence and circulation over the years, and in 1978 it reached no more than two-thirds of the Association's members. With Allen's leadership, the Association signed the agreement in November 1978 to purchase the magazine. The first issue published in St. Joseph was issued in July 1979. For several years, until finances dictated otherwise, it was distributed free to every Association member.

For the first time, every member received monthly information directly from the Association. What's more, in time the magazine proved to be a valuable profit center. Its support of half the regional manager staff kept that force intact despite falling Association revenue. The *Journal* also supported other Angus educational activities.

Second, Allen also helped save the CAB Program. In November 1978 Carol Tucker Foreman, the enthusiastic but sometimes misguided assistant secretary of agriculture for food and consumer services, read a story



C.K. ALLEN

- 1978-1981
- Purchased the *Aberdeen-Angus Journal*.
- Gained permission to continue the CAB Program.
- First *Sire Evaluation Report* based on field data was issued.
- Field data and structured sire evaluation data were combined into one *Sire Evaluation Report*.

about the new Program. Skeptical, and looking to prove that she and the administration were committed to protecting consumers, she concluded that this was some kind of consumer rip-off.

Looking further into the Program, she discovered there was no completed form in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) files allowing the Association to use a carcass roll. It was a technicality; the

Program, from its inception, was developed with the help of USDA personnel. On Nov. 12, 1978, she pulled the CAB Program carcass roll, effectively shutting down the Program.

Once the bureaucratic decision had been made, it was difficult to reverse, even in the face of overwhelming evidence. Allen and Louis "Mick" Colvin, director of the Program, swung into action, writing letters, making personal contact and even meeting with members of the USDA. Four months later, on April 2, 1979, the USDA gave permission to resume the Program. A negative decision would have changed the course of Angus history.

The growth of the AHIR program continued in Allen's administration. In 1980 the first field data *Sire Evaluation Report* was issued. This report made use of AHIR records collected in herds all over the country and was not the result of a structured program. It greatly expanded the source of expected progeny difference (EPD) information. The following year, the field data *Sire Evaluation Report* and the structured *Sire Evaluation Report* were combined.

At the March 1981 Board of Directors meeting, Allen submitted his resignation, to be effective May 1. At three years, his was the shortest administration of any of the Association's chief executive officers. There was no long search this time. At that same March meeting the Board hired the Association's current executive vice president, Richard Spader. It was the second time in 98 years that a staff member was selected for the job.

A natural for the position

A native of Howard, S.D., Spader grew

1978

First *Certified Angus Beef™* product sold



1978

CAB Program carcass roll pulled, shutting down the Program

1978

Aberdeen-Angus Journal purchased



1979

Permission granted to resume CAB Program



1980

First *Sire Evaluation Report* based on field data issued

1981

Sire evaluation reports from field data and structured sire evaluation combined

1984

"Elephant" ads premiered



THE FACES OF THE AMERICAN ANGUS ASSOCIATION CONTINUED

up on the family farm. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1962 through 1965 and joined the Association's public relations department in 1969 after graduating from South Dakota State University in Brookings with a major in animal science and a minor in journalism.

Spader was soon promoted to assistant director of public relations. In 1973 he was named assistant director of the AHIR program. For a time he worked in both departments, helping issue the first national *Sire Evaluation Report* in 1974. In 1976 he became full-time director of performance programs. As head of the department, he issued the first *Pathfinder Report* and the first EBVs. In 1976, and again in 1977, the Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) named the American Angus Association as the Association of the Year.

Spader inherited an Association still suffering business declines. Budgeting to balance income and expenses while continuing to support essential programs like AHIR, advertising, junior activities and field services was a yearly exercise in tightrope walking.

In order to keep the regional manager force, Spader, at his first Board Meeting as executive vice president, asked for and received permission to gradually integrate *Angus Journal* advertising representatives and Association regional managers. This was accomplished within two years without member complaint. Today regional managers are supported equally by the *Journal* and the Association.

Other less dramatic budget-saving programs were called for until fiscal year 1987. That year the Association ended a 19-year decline in registrations and began a sustained period of growth.



RICHARD SPADER

- 1981-Present
- Integrated *Angus Journal* ad reps with Association regional managers.
- Performance movement became generally accepted.
- Nonparent EPDs were developed.
- Began issuing performance pedigrees on all animals.
- Development of ultrasound to evaluate progeny for carcass quality.
- *Certified Angus Beef*™ sales reach 411 million lb.
- National Junior Angus Association membership reaches 10,000.
- Angus Foundation endowment fund reaches \$800,000.
- Created and expanded circulation and content of the *Angus Beef Bulletin*.
- Board adopts long-range plan.

It was during the 1980s that the Angus "performance movement" became generally accepted by Association members. Within a few years it was widely used by commercial bull customers. Three milestones mark the revolution that has taken place in Angus performance since 1981.

First was the field data *Sire Evaluation Report* issued initially in 1980. It meant that bulls no longer had to be enrolled in an expensive and time-consuming structured breeding program in order to establish EPDs. Suddenly these valuable breeding and marketing tools were being calculated on a much wider and less expensive scale.

Second was the development of nonparent EPDs. With this program it was possible to calculate EPDs on young bulls and females that had not yet produced progeny. It opened the door for registered breeders to begin selecting young replacement females on EPD performance. Probably more important, it allowed commercial cow herd owners to use EPDs instead of ratios when selecting bulls.

Having EPDs on young bulls, producers could compare bulls from different herds in different parts of the country and make more accurate buying and breeding decisions. About this same time, the Board approved replacing the standard pedigree with performance pedigrees on every registration certificate.

Development of ultrasound to evaluate progeny for carcass quality was the third milestone. This program, today in its infancy, promises to allow breeders to dramatically improve carcass quality genetics in Angus cattle. For example, from the beginning of the first structured Sire Evaluation Program through spring 1999, just more than 40,000 bull progeny had

ASSOCIATION TIME LINE



1981
C.K. Allen resigned; Board promoted Richard Spader

1985
First *Angus Beef Bulletin* published

1986
Registrations bottomed out at 133,475

1988
Registrations hit 252,969

1991
AHMS Department created

been slaughtered and evaluated for carcass merit. In the first round of ultrasound evaluation, some 19,000 progeny carcass records were recorded, and 50,000 are expected to be processed this year.

In the 1980s the CAB Program helped change the way people thought about beef cattle production. Before the Program captured the attention of the industry, it was generally accepted that high-quality beef was a luxury that neither consumers nor producers could afford. Some argued that, to survive, the beef industry needed to produce the lowest-quality beef still acceptable to consumers. That kind of talk changed in the late 1980s.

In 1982 sales of *Certified Angus Beef* product totaled 470,000 pounds (lb.) — an impressive figure, but only a fraction of total beef production. The next year, however, sales exploded to 3.2 million lb., then 8.3 million lb. the next year, closing the decade in 1990 with sales of 85 million lb. In 1998 sales topped 411 million lb., and they continue to grow.

The junior activities program has developed into a much larger vehicle for growth. Emphasis on leadership development today involves many Angus youth and helps stimulate growth in other areas of junior activities. The annual Leaders Engaged in Angus Development (LEAD) Conference, with its emphasis on industry issues and leadership development, exposes young people to important issues and helps develop future leaders for the Angus business and other areas.

Growth in the number of National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) members stabilized at more than 10,000 members in 1997. Since 1991 the number of cattle and exhibitors at the National Junior Angus

Show (NJAS) has doubled. Participation has increased dramatically in the other contests and events that have become a part of the national event.

The endowment fund for the Angus Foundation now stands at more than \$800,000, thanks to generous contributions from Angus people who care about young people and the future of the Angus breed. The endowment supports many junior educational projects and activities, especially the work of the NJAA Board of Directors.

Communications have been improved in every area. The *Angus Beef Bulletin*, which is produced for commercial cattle producers using registered Angus bulls, has been expanded and improved. Today it goes to approximately 62,000 producers four times a year and is supported completely by advertising revenue.

In 1984 the “elephant” ads produced by the Association changed the way people thought about cattle breeding. They dramatized the futility of selecting beef cattle for mature size alone, which had become the fad that Miller warned against in 1978. The positive message presented by the ads was that, by using Angus with desirable EPDs for milk, growth and carcass quality, commercial producers could exercise more control over their herds and over the price they received for feeder cattle. The ads have been followed by campaigns that continue to emphasize the extra value the industry places on well-bred, predictable Angus cattle.

Long-range Association planning was initiated by Spader in 1991. The Board, with the help of the staff, makes a regular evaluation of the Association’s activities and takes a close look at future needs. Out of these planning sessions have come the

Angus Information Management Software (AIMS) Department, the Commercial Relations Department, and the expansion of the Association’s headquarters building to provide new offices for the *Angus Journal*.

In 1999 the Association celebrates its 116th year. It stands as the largest, most influential beef breed association in the world. Angus genetics are not only the standard in the United States, but they are the standard in virtually every country where Angus cattle are produced. Credit for this must go to the membership and to the officers and directors the members have elected to run the Association.

Officers and directors come and go, but the chief executive officers they put in charge of the Association have provided continuity, leadership and professional support to the largest beef breed association in the world.

Editor’s Note: See the June/July Angus Journal for Part 1 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.



1991
Long-range
planning began

1997
NJAA
membership
stabilized at
more than
10,000

1998
Building
expansion for
the *Angus
Journal*

1998
Commercial Relations
Department created



1998
Expanded the
role of the
*Angus Beef
Bulletin*, increasing
circulation to
more than
62,000

1999
First ultrasound evaluations
for carcass quality published

