

# The Road to Gold

Twenty-one juniors follow leadership and dedication down the golden road to success.

by *Corinne Blender*

*Twenty-one members of the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) have earned the coveted Gold Award in 2001.*

*Achievements accomplished along this golden road have been an educational opportunity that will continue to lead them down avenues to further opportunities in the beef industry.*

*Outstanding members are recognized at several points during their travels through their NJAA careers. Intermediate goalposts are the Bronze and Silver awards, which have to be earned before qualifying for the Gold Award.*

*The road to gold requires participation and achievement in leadership, show competition, performance testing, production and merchandising of Angus cattle. The Gold Award recognizes several years — perhaps a decade — of dedication to the Angus breed. Members apply for the Gold Award during their final year of eligibility as an NJAA member.*

*Complete and accurate records are vital when applying for any of the award programs. Contact the Junior Activities Department at the American Angus Association for further information.*

*This year's Gold Award recipients include the following NJAA members.*

## **Dixie Berry**

Dixie Berry, daughter of William and Jackie Berry, Ardmore, Ala., served as the Alabama Junior Angus Association secretary/treasurer from 1997 to 2001. She was a director in 1996 and represented her state as the Angus queen in 1997.



**Dixie Berry**

She began her NJAA career in 1993. She attended the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) as a voting delegate from 1996 to 1998. Dixie also entered the NJAA photography contest in 1997.

Dixie says she has found performance testing offered by the Association to be helpful in improving her herd and in increasing her knowledge of the cattle industry.

"The knowledge of cattle and people, along with the responsibility and

leadership I have learned, I will carry with me in my everyday life forever," Dixie says.

She currently attends Auburn University and is pursuing a degree in accounting. She plans to graduate in May 2002.

## **Jeff Covell**

Showmanship and champion heifers highlight Jeff Covell's NJAA career. He represented Maryland in the showmanship contest at the 2000 NJAS and was a top-15 finalist. He also has participated in team sales and quiz bowl at the NJAS.

"I have achieved great personal gains from the NJAA. I have made friendships that will last a lifetime and have a countless number of memories," Jeff says. "I also have learned many life lessons that will take me far in life."

The son of Donald and Ann Covell of Frederick, Jeff served as the fund-raising director for the Maryland Junior Angus Association.

"My involvement in the junior Angus program has spurred me to be involved in other activities, advanced the quality of my Angus herd and pushed me to go beyond what I thought was my best," Jeff says.



**Jeff Covell**

He has exhibited at many state and national shows, claiming several reserve and grand champion titles in 2000 and 2001. This year he won the steer show at the Atlantic National and Eastern Regional with a bred-and-owned steer. He exhibited the national champion Angus female at the North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE) in 1998.

Jeff attends Kansas State University (K-State) where he is majoring in animal science with a pre-veterinary option.

## **Sunny Carlson**

A decade with the Angus breed has led to success for Sunny Carlson, daughter of Charles and Kathryn Carlson, Thief River Falls, Minn.

Sunny has exhibited numerous bred-and-owned Angus cattle at state and national shows. She represented her state as an NJAA voting delegate in 2000 and as Angus queen in 1997-1998. She also has served as secretary/treasurer and president of the Minnesota Junior Angus Association.



**Sunny Carlson**

"My best experience happened when I was Angus queen. A little boy came up to me and thought it was so neat to take a picture with me," Sunny says. "It's something that I think we aren't always aware of. Little kids are always watching you, and you have to be aware of that."

The 21-year-old Angus enthusiast reigned as the first-place showman at the Pennington County Fair from 1995 to 1999. Showmanship has meant much more than winning to her.

"Through my learning showmanship, I feel it's my job to help other juniors. I think that's what makes it so important," Sunny says.

She currently attends Minnesota State University, Moorhead. She plans to graduate in May 2003 with a degree in elementary education, with a math specialty, and in business.

## **Addie Hawkins**

An NJAA member since 1990, Addie Hawkins has been active in many Angus junior programs. The 21-year-old daughter of Glenn and Lisa Hawkins, Magnolia, Ky., has served as an NJAA voting delegate. She was the Kentucky Junior Angus Association president in 1999 and second vice president in 1998.

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No matter what responsibility Addie assumed, she used her experiences to grow and to learn.

"I've learned how to make the best out of every situation that I'm in, no matter whether it was a good or bad situation," Addie says. "Every experience happens for a reason and helps mold you into the person you'll become."



**Addie Hawkins**

On the national level, she received the American Angus Auxiliary Scholarship in 1998 and won honorable mention in the National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest in 2000. Addie also has participated in the photography, poster and Auxiliary-sponsored *Certified Angus Beef*® Cook-Off contests.

Addie has been active in many aspects of the NJAA, and she says she will miss the social aspect the most.

"I will miss being with all of my friends that I share a common bond with. But I will always know that we'll keep in contact and remain friends for a long time," Addie says.

Addie is pursuing a degree in marketing at the University of Louisville. She plans to graduate in 2003.

### **Laura Hooper**

Laura Hooper, Bliss, Idaho, has seen her Angus breeding and marketing projects grow during her 11 years of experience in the NJAA. She has taken advantage of collecting data about her Angus herd, and she uses it to help make her bulls worth more when marketing them.

"I use both production and carcass EPDs to select the Angus cattle that are right for my breeding program. I have entered my cattle in the Angus ultrasound EPD (expected progeny difference) program and feel this may be another tool cattlemen can use when trying to improve their herds," Laura says.



**Laura Hooper**

She also has learned the value of visual appraisal. She has judged at more than 50 FFA, 4-H and junior Angus livestock-judging contests. Active in her state association, she has served as president, vice president and secretary/treasurer.

"I have enjoyed my junior Angus experiences on the state, regional and national levels," Laura says. "Exhibiting cattle is a true challenge, but the other activities — such as the Angus photo

contest, team sales and beef quiz bowl — have helped me learn more about the beef industry."

Laura, daughter of Graham and Patty Hooper, graduated in May 2001 from the College of Southern Idaho with a degree in animal science. She is the owner of TLC Ranch and is currently working there before transferring to the University of Idaho to begin work on a master's degree in animal science.

### **Heath Johnson**

The highlight of Heath Johnson's 12-year career in the NJAA has been his time serving on the Board of Directors. He currently serves as the communications director.

"There have been many great moments throughout my Angus

career, but the greatest single moment occurred last summer when I was selected to the NJAA Board of Directors," Heath says. "This was a dream come true for me because I have the opportunity to make an impact on the members of the National Junior Angus Association, and that fills me with great pride and honor."



**Heath Johnson**

He has been a leader of the Mississippi Junior Angus Association, serving as vice president in 1995 and president from 1996 to 2001.

Heath, the son of Stuart and Brenda Johnson and Alyce Johnson, has shown in numerous local, state, regional and national shows. He has been a showmanship finalist at the NJAS and

has participated in the photography, team sales and poster contests.

"I am very grateful for my affiliation with the National Junior Angus Association, and I will cherish the people who have helped encourage and mold me into a better person," he says.

Heath is currently a senior at Mississippi State University majoring in microbiology. Upon graduation in December 2002, he plans to attend medical school to become an allergy specialist.

### **Mary Dawn Kendrick**

Texas junior Angus member Mary Dawn Kendrick is the daughter of Mickey and Rose Mary Kendrick, Southlake.

Mary Dawn represented her state as the 1998 Angus queen and was also a Texas Junior Angus Association scholarship winner that year. She has served as a director for four years and reporter and first vice president for one year.



**Mary Dawn Kendrick**

"I did learn a lot growing up showing cattle," Mary Dawn says. "I learned patience, dependability, love and caring, and how to work hard."

On the national level, she has participated in the Cook-Off, team sales, computer cow-calf game and public speaking.

"I have learned a lot of life skills through the showing of cattle. I have also made friends all over the U.S. Once we walk out of the showing, we are truly friends," she says.

Mary Dawn is currently working as an assistant to the fleet truck sales manager at Five Star Ford in North Richland Hills. She helps on the family farm during weekends.

### **Kendra Kelton**

The rewards have been numerous for Kendra Kelton, daughter of Robin and Susan Kelton, Muldrow, Okla.

"My years as a National Junior Angus Association member have been rewarding, priceless and, above all, memorable," Kendra says. "The opportunities and friends the NJAA has given me are too numerous to count."

She has had many leadership opportunities and has held several offices in the Oklahoma Junior Angus Association, including treasurer (since 1998), director and reporter.

"From my first junior national to giving speeches to participating in the Cook-Off to serving as the state Angus queen and hosting the



**Kendra Kelton**

communications and animal science. I plan to continue to be an ambassador for the Angus breed and agriculture.”

### **Nicole Long**

Nicole Long is the current Virginia Junior Angus Association reporter and is president of the Northern Virginia Angus Association. She has been actively involved since becoming a member in 1998.



**Nicole Long**

national contests like Cook-Off, quiz bowl, public speaking, posters, essays and graphics,” Nicole says.

She attended the 2001 Mini Leaders Engaged in Angus Development (mini-LEAD) conference in West Virginia.

“By far, my favorite memory will be the mini-LEAD conferences in West Virginia. I will always remember where I learned to ski,” Nicole says.

She plans to graduate in December from Shenandoah University, Winchester, Va., with a degree in psychology and a minor in elementary education.

### **Lana Myers**

Lana Myers has been an NJAA member since 1989, but she says she just recently has learned how much her membership means to her.



**Lana Myers**

NJAA Foundation Scholarship winner twice.

1999 junior national, every experience has been rewarding and educational,” Kendra says.

Nationally, she served as a voting delegate in 1997. She also has participated in the photography and team sales contests.

“The challenges I have faced in the NJAA have molded me into the person I am today,” she says. “As a student at Oklahoma State University, I am pursuing a degree in agricultural

communications and animal science. I plan to continue to be an ambassador for the Angus breed and agriculture.”

She also has been competitive in the showing, winning champion bred-and-owned honors at the 2000 Louisiana Field Day and reserve champion honors in 1999. Lana will serve on the NJAA Board of Directors from 2001 to 2003.

Lana currently attends Louisiana State University and is pursuing a degree in agricultural business. She says she plans to graduate in December 2002 and to continue her education in graduate school.

### **Trisha Neumeister**

Nebraska junior Angus member Trisha Neumeister has served as the president of the Northeast Junior Angus Association since 1999.



**Trisha Neumeister**

role in my life either as role models or friends,” Trisha says.

She has shown at the local, state, regional and national levels. She has claimed the top showmanship title at several events, and she represented Nebraska at the 1998 National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest.

She also has participated in the Cook-Off. She was active in FFA and 4-H. She also has received her artificial insemination (AI) certification.

Trisha is currently pursuing a degree in animal science from the University of Nebraska. She plans to graduate in May 2003 and to continue her education in veterinary school.

### **Tom Patterson**

Tom Patterson, Columbus, Mont., has grown to appreciate and to understand the beef industry through his experiences in the NJAA.

“As I look back over my years in the National Junior Angus Association, I realize that my affiliation with this organization has allowed me to not only compete and exhibit livestock at state,



**Tom Patterson**

Tom says.

Tom was a voting delegate for the NJAA in 1997 and 1998, and he

regional and national levels, [but] it has also given me a greater understanding and appreciation of the entire beef industry,” Tom says.

The son of John and Pam Patterson has been a strong leader for his state. He served as the Montana Junior Angus Association (MJAA) president in 1997-1998 and was secretary of the Montana Junior Beef Expo in 1999. He currently serves as chairman of the NJAA Board of Directors.

“These leadership roles have allowed me to improve and challenge myself. They have given me the chance to make a difference in the association that has given so very much,”

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received the Angus Foundation Scholarship in 1999 and 2000. He also was awarded the MJAA and the Montana Beef Expo scholarships in 1999. He has attended the NJAA LEAD Conference for the past four years.

Tom currently attends K-State, where he is a member of the livestock-judging team. He is majoring in animal science and plans to graduate in 2003.

### **George Richburg**

A 12-year member of the NJAA, George Richburg is the son of Mahlon and Mary Richburg, Auburn, Ala. George is the 2000-2001 president of the Alabama Junior Angus Association (AJAA) and was vice president from 1998 to 2000.



**George Richburg**

"In all my years as a junior, I have made so many lifelong friendships," George says. "I have learned to be a leader, responsible and a good role model for younger kids."

George has been a leader in many ways. He represented his state as a voting delegate in 1999 and has participated in the team sales, computer cow-calf game and quiz bowl contests at the NJAS. He was also a showmanship finalist at the 2000 NJAS.

He has seen much success in the showing, placing in the top of his classes at the NJAS. He won grand champion honors for his bred-and-owned entry at the Alabama Field Day in 1998.

George values the time he spent showing and growing up as a member of the NJAA.

"All of the memories and people I have met on all levels — local, state and national — are priceless," George says.

He attends Auburn University and is pursuing a degree in agricultural economics with a minor in animal science. He plans to graduate in December 2002.

### **Cindy Rezac**

Cindy Rezac, Saint Marys, Kan., has seen her life shaped by her 10 years of involvement in the NJAA.

"The life experiences I have had, the many friends that I have made throughout the country, as well as in my home state of Kansas, and the many interesting places that my travels with my Angus cattle



**Cindy Rezac**

have taken me have all helped me to learn and grow," she says.

Cindy has served many offices in the Northeast Kansas Junior Angus Association (NEKJAA). She also represented Kansas as the 1997 Angus queen. In 1998, she was the Kansas Angus Auxiliary first-place girls' scholarship winner and the third-place American Angus Auxiliary scholarship winner.

Cindy has seen success in the showing, too. She won grand champion bred-and-owned honors at the 1998 NEKJAA Show. She says she has learned a lot from traveling with her family and Angus cattle.

"Of course, I cannot forget what my registered Angus herd alone has taught me: lessons about life, pecking order, caution, sacrifice, quality, hard work, the true meaning of a cold night in Kansas, the

maximum capacity of a wheel-barrow, persistence and perseverance, humbleness, pride, and so much more," Cindy says.

Cindy, daughter of Dennis and Nancy Rezac, is a senior at Wichita State University majoring in sport administration and pre-law. She plans to graduate in May 2002 and to begin law school.

### **Jessica Sawyer**

Jessica Sawyer, Bassett, Neb., has been dedicated to serving her state and the NJAA. She is on the NJAA Board of Directors and has served as president, secretary/treasurer and historian of the Nebraska Junior Angus Association.



**Jessica Sawyer**

Jessica is accustomed to winning both in the showing and in leadership contests. She won first-place honors at the 2000 NJAS for her bred-and-owned heifer and second-place honors for her bred-and-owned bull. She was also named grand champion showman.

She has participated in several contests at the NJAS, including public speaking, photography, team sales, poster and the Cook-Off. Her dedication makes her a strong role model for others.

"I would tell them to follow their passion. Try the contests and opportunities available through the NJAA. Find the events or programs that you enjoy and put 110% into them," Jessica advises younger members wanting to get involved.

Jessica values carcass data and has entered steers in the NJAS carcass steer contest. She takes advantage of performance records provided by the Association.

The daughter of Arlen and Becky Sawyer is a senior at K-State majoring in animal science with a minor in leadership studies. She plans to attend nursing or medical school after graduation.

### **Brett Spader**

Angus enthusiast Brett Spader, son of Richard and Sheri Spader, Rosendale, Mo., became a member of the NJAA before he reached the age of 1.

Brett has been a successful public speaker, winning first at the NJAS in 1997 and 1993. He also participated in photography, team sales and Cook-Off contests.



**Brett Spader**

Brett is a strong leader and has participated in the LEAD Conference three years. He was named the Missouri 4-H senior public speaking winner in 1998. He says he feels his NJAA activities have coincided well with 4-H and FFA, as he has been involved in each organization.

Brett is currently a senior studying animal science at the University of Missouri-Columbia. He plans to graduate in December 2002 and to pursue advanced degrees in reproductive physiology in beef cattle and horses.

### **Cody Sankey**

Cody Sankey, Council Grove, Kan., is proud of his Angus heritage and is dedicated to the beef industry.

"The NJAA and the Kansas Junior Angus Association (KJAA) have provided me with character-building experiences throughout my

years of growing up," Cody says. "The opportunities to meet people and to be involved in breed activities on the state, regional and national levels cannot be measured."



**Cody Sankey**

Cody, son of Chris and Sharee Sankey, has served as president of the KJAA, as well as vice president, secretary, treasurer and director. He is currently an ex officio director. He also has served KJAA by representing the state as a voting delegate to the NJAA Annual Meeting and has been the recipient of national and state scholarships.

He participates on the national level in the computer cow-calf game and in the showmanship, Cook-Off, team sales, poster and quiz bowl contests.

Cody is currently a senior at Oklahoma State University pursuing a degree in animal science and industries, business option. He plans to graduate in fall 2002.

### **Anne Schmalenberger**

Winning hasn't always been easy for Anne Schmalenberger, daughter of Steve and Nancy Schmalenberger, Vincent, Iowa.

"From my involvement with Angus cattle and the junior programs, I learned that accomplishments don't come easily," Anne says, noting that "it takes hard work and dedication to be successful."



**Anne Schmalenberger**

Anne has placed at the top in several competitions, including the photography, computer cow-calf game, poster and Cook-Off contests. She was also a state representative in the National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest in 1999.

Anne is also familiar with the backdrop, having won several grand, reserve and division champion honors during her NJAA career. She served as

Miss American Angus in 1999. She is also involved in performance-testing programs and has produced several Pathfinder cows.

Anne plans to graduate in December 2002 from Iowa State University with a degree in industrial and manufacturing systems engineering.

### **Whitney Trosper**

Friendships made in the NJAA outweigh everything else for Whitney Trosper, daughter of Steve and Sandy Trosper, Hamilton, Mo.

"From Lincoln, Neb., at my very first National Junior Angus Show to now in Denver, Colo., at my very last National Junior Angus Show, the friendships I have gained are something that will be with me for a lifetime. There isn't a blue ribbon, purple banner or giant trophy in the world that can replace the friends I have made," she says.



**Whitney Trosper**

Through scholarship and leadership, Whitney has seen much success. She received scholarships from the Missouri Angus Auxiliary and the American Angus Auxiliary in 1999. She

represented her state as the Angus queen in 1998 and went on to be Miss American Angus in 2000.

She has served as president of the Missouri Junior Angus Association this past year and has also served as secretary and vice president. She has shown animals that have placed in the top of their classes.

Whitney currently attends the University of Missouri-Columbia. She is majoring in hotel and restaurant management and plans to graduate in May 2003.

### **Lance Thompson**

Lance Thompson has been a strong member of the Missouri Junior Angus Association, serving as a director, membership development officer and reporter from 1997 to 1999. He was vice president of the Cole County Cattleman's Association in 2000.



**Lance Thompson**

Lance, son of Larry and Judith Thompson, Russellville, has used the performance-testing activities provided by the Association to evaluate his herd.

Showing locally and nationally, he has seen success exhibiting both owned and bred-and-owned animals.

He attended the 2000 LEAD Conference and was a recipient of the 1998 Missouri Angus Auxiliary scholarship.

"I had a great career in the National Junior Angus Association. I was able to run for the National Junior Angus Association Board of Directors, was finalist in the national showmanship contest and was able to meet many new friends in the Angus industry," Lance says.

He is currently a senior at the University of Missouri-Columbia majoring in animal science. He plans to graduate in May 2002.

### **Clayton Wieben**

For Clayton Wieben, the NJAA has shaped his life and directed him to a career involving Angus cattle.

"The NJAA has influenced my life in every aspect, from what I do every day with my animals to what I hope to achieve in later years with involvement in the cattle industry," Clayton says.

The son of Mike and Wendy Wieben, Leesburg, Va., currently serves as president of the Virginia Junior Angus Association. He also attended the West Virginia leadership conference this year.



**Clayton Wieben**

Clayton has had many successes in the showing, claiming reserve grand champion at the Atlantic National and grand champion at the Virginia Beef Expo, to highlight a few.

But Clayton says he will miss the friends he has made even more than the champion honors.

"It's easy to pick out what I will miss the most about the NJAA, and that is the friends I have made from attending the many different events offered by the NJAA," Clayton says.

"The highlight of my junior career has got to be the fact that I have now made a professional career from my junior experience. It is safe to say that I am hooked on showing, and I am now making a career as a freelance fitter," Clayton says.

