



One showman becomes more than just a number when she claims top honors at the 2001 National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest.

Story and photos by **Corinne Blender**

Rachel Postin will remember the number 25 for years to come. That was the number she wore as she claimed the champion showman title at the 2001 National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) in Denver, Colo.

One of three judges for the 2001 competition, Andra Campbell of Klamath Falls, Ore., told the 15 showmanship finalists that their contestant numbers might become as special to them as the number 5 is to her. That's the number she wore the day she won the 1990 National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest in Omaha, Neb.

It's an honor only one National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) member can claim each year.

Position of honor

Postin claimed champion honors by competing against 52 of the top showmen from 31 states nationwide.

"It's an awesome experience just to be chosen first out of so many kids you know — some of the greatest showmen across the country," she adds.

Judge Tim Fitzgerald, Alderson, W.Va., knows how prestigious — and how difficult — it can be to be top showman at the NJAS.

"This is the most prestigious award I think you can receive at a junior national," Fitzgerald says. "When you have the best breed of cattle, the best organization, the best fieldmen, the best Board and easily the best group of juniors, I think it's certainly an honor — and quite a pleasure — for me to stand out here and evaluate these youngsters."

Shared experience

Juniors generally share an honor such as this with the people who are closest to them. Even though Postin's parents could not be there to support their daughter in person, she was not alone. Support came from a slew of friends, both old and new.

"It's kind of weird. This is the first time at a show without my mom here. I've talked to her twice a day, every day," Postin says. "I wish they were here, and I know they wish they were here, too."

The phone rang in Stephens, Ga., moments after all of the hugs and congratulations began to dwindle in Denver. Her parents, Rob and Kelly Postin, were unable to make the trek west because of a prior commitment at home.

"When we received Rachel's phone call, we were ecstatic. We are very proud of her and only wish we could have been there to share this special and honorable moment with her," Kelly says.

Melvin and Donna Porter, advisors for the Georgia Junior Angus Association, stepped in as surrogate parents for Postin.

"I felt my role was to encourage Rachel, and I tried to do that in any way, before and after," Melvin says. "I felt that was what I saw to be my role as her surrogate parent."

There to support her were friends and even a long-distance relative that she didn't know she had. Rhonda McMillan congratulated Postin and introduced herself as her cousin upon recognizing her name in the show program.

Longtime family friend Ron Springer, Keithville, La.; Robbie Duis, Donovan, Ill.; and the Georgia delegation all were there to provide support and encouragement.

A participant

"Traveling from Georgia to Denver was a little too far for me to bring a heifer. However, I was very privileged to represent Georgia not only as the showmanship representative but also as the voting delegate," Postin says. "I made several new friends; plus, I was able to spend time with the friends I had made at the past NJAS."

The 2001 show was only the third NJAS in which Postin has competed. She first became involved in the show when it took place in her home state in 1997.

The Postin family manages RSE Farms, which includes both Angus and Chiangus cattle herds. The Postins also raise club calves. Rachel and her mother spend most of their

time with the show cattle, while her father handles the farming and wildlife.

The Porters say they have watched Postin, whom they have known all her life, grow into a fine young lady. They say her experiences with cattle and showing have made her a mature and knowledgeable person.

"I have the utmost respect for her. She is a very polite and respectable individual and a great role model for the kids," Melvin says. "She has been good at learning to win and learning to lose. She is very graceful in both."

The number 25 may not be the last number this young showman will wear to claim honors at a national junior show. Postin, 19, has a couple of years left to compete and plans to take advantage of every moment.

"It's wonderful to just be here with everybody and visit all the breeders and exhibitors. I think the Angus breed has some terrific juniors, exceptional cattle and outstanding breeders," Postin says.

No matter what the breed, Postin says cattle and the showing never will be too far from her reach.

"Cattle are my life. I've lived on a farm and showed my whole life, and I'll continue to do this the rest of my life," she says.

A friend suggested that Postin keep the number that identified her throughout the competition. If she doesn't remember the exact number she wore that day, she says she always will remember the support the Angus breed gives to youth.

"I think the thing I noticed about this show is all of the support that's here. You see a lot of previous exhibitors, adults and breeders here that come back and continue to support the program year after year. I think the Angus exhibitors have a good thing going for them with the National Junior Angus Association," she says.



1. Melvin and Donna Porter, advisors for the Georgia Junior Angus Association, are surrogate parents for Rachel while she competes in the showmanship contest. This is the first time her mother has not been by her side at a cattle show.

2. After the initial excitement dies down, Rachel takes a moment to call her parents. Unable to make the trip to Denver, they were thrilled when they heard about their daughter's success. Rachel and her mother are close and spend a lot of time together working with the show cattle.

3. Rachel is all smiles when she is announced the winner of the 2001 National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest. She currently attends the University of Georgia, majoring in animal science.

4. Rachel waits with the 14 other finalists as the judges tabulate their scores. She was named the top showman among 52 contestants from 31 states.

