

by Julie Mais
Editor



What's Next?

A shy girl with a competitive spirit seems like a peculiar combination. But as I look back on my childhood, that's how I would describe myself.

We were about a month or so out from junior nationals, and I told my parents I wanted to compete in the prepared public speaking contest like my older sister. It wasn't until recently I learned I shocked my parents with this declaration.

So they went with it. For most of the summer, 9-year-old me worked hard on a speech. I wrote drafts, got input from my family, made note cards and even practiced in front of my show heifers.

I still remember the nerves walking into that small conference room in my sunflower dress. Standing in front of the judges, I took a deep breath and gave my first speech.

I can't remember if I placed or not that year, but I was hooked on the competition and the process of working hard toward something.

Do all things come to those who wait, or do you have to go after them? Patience and persistence should be admired, but the planning, hard work and hustle are what it takes to move forward.

Walt Disney once said: "A person should set his goals as early as he

can and devote all his energy and talent to getting there. With enough effort, he may achieve it. Or he may find something that is even more rewarding. But in the end, no matter what the outcome, he will know he has been alive."

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I will forever be thankful for junior programs similar to the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) that provided opportunities for me to develop lifelong skills. Iron sharpens iron, and

competition among friends that feel like family sets the stage for positive growth.

Fast-forward a little more than 10 years, and I found myself as a sophomore in college and looking for an internship to support my agricultural communications aspirations. For some time I had my eye set on working for a beef breed association.


When I learned the American Angus Association communications department offered an internship, I knew I had to go for it. I prepared my application materials and sent them in. I received a response that I should seek more experience and was

encouraged to apply the following year. I did just that and landed the internship of my dreams.

My summer with the Association's communications department helped to set the stage for where I find myself today — employed by the same association I aspired to serve as an intern.

This issue of the *Angus Journal* is all about "What's Next?" and highlights young Angus breeders who set goals and worked hard to achieve them. This culminates with the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) hosted in late July in Tulsa, Okla.

Association staff, NJAA members and families, sponsors and Angus supporters all worked together and put in countless hours to host an event safely and successfully amid a pandemic.

As we transition into yet another fall season, but one that will look unlike any other, I wish you and your family the best at achieving "What's Next." 

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie".

jmais@angus.org