

One Last Time

Retiring National Junior Angus Board members reflect on their junior careers and look forward to what's ahead.

by Madi Baughman, editorial intern

Elected by a delegation of their peers from across the nation, holding the title of a National Junior Angus Board (NJAB) Member is one of rich history and high respect. You can usually find the “green coats” helping out in the show ring at Angus exhibitions, interacting with juniors and upholding the highest standards while representing the Angus breed.

Every year, as six new members are elected, six who have served for two years hang up those green coats for the last time. The retiring members revisit their journey with the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA), as well as their time at the helm of the organization, as they pass the torch to the next six.



These six NJAB members have served since being elected at the 2018 NJAS in Madison, Wis.

Tyler Bush



A sixth-generation farmer and purebred Angus breeder from Britton, S.D., Tyler Bush finished his term as NJAB chairman this year.

The son of Scott and Jo Bush says his favorite part of being on the board was serving as a role model for younger junior members. He says he was blessed to be selected as NJAB chairman because it gave him the opportunity to lead his team in the right direction.

One of the most rewarding things about being an NJAB member, Bush says, is seeing the board come together with the common goal of making the NJAA the best it can be for its members. “Being on the junior board and having to work with 11 other individuals and a team of advisors, you definitely learn what everyone has to offer,” Bush says. “I learned to take the backseat, hear what everyone has to say and build off of those ideas.”

Bush currently attends South Dakota State University studying animal science. He plans to return to his family’s farm after graduation to

continue pushing their program in the right direction to influence the cattle industry and Angus breed.

He says he would also like to begin judging shows with his father and continue involvement with the South Dakota Junior Angus Association.

Baxter Knapp



Growing up on a farm near Bloomfield, Iowa, where they had corn, soybeans and commercial cattle, Baxter Knapp says he purchased his

first registered Angus heifer in 2009 and competed at his first National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) in 2010 in Denver.

“From a very early age, seeing the ‘green coats’ around working the show ring and being an example to everybody, that was something I always looked at and strived for doing,” Knapp says.

The son of Brian and Karla Knapp says his goal has been to be a positive influence on junior members from all across the nation since being elected in 2018 and being selected as NJAB vice chairman in 2019.

He says his time on the board has helped him become a better leader by allowing him the opportunity to grow his organization, problem-



solving, team-building and communication skills.

After graduating from Iowa State University with a bachelor's degree in animal science, Knapp plans to buy a farm and continue raising Angus cattle while pursuing a career in an agricultural or animal science field. He would also like to continue to be involved in the NJAA to give back to the future of the Angus breed.

Keegan Cassidy



After getting her first registered Angus show heifer in 2009, the daughter of Jerry Cassidy and Erica Johnson, Keegan Cassidy, was

hooked on the Angus breed.

As she was wrapping up her service as Miss American Angus her freshman year of college, Cassidy realized she wanted to pursue an NJAB position to serve as a voice for junior members. The retiring NJAB membership director says her team wanted to make sure the junior members and their needs stayed their No. 1 priority throughout their two years of service.

"Working for [the junior members] is really humbling," Cassidy says. "I definitely love being a resource and mentor for others because that's exactly why I ran for the board."

Cassidy says she has learned to be a better teammate as well as serving something bigger than herself throughout her term on the NJAB. She says some of her favorite

memories were accomplishing her team's goals at board meetings, including the implementation of Angus Impact, the NJAA community service project.

A graduate of Oklahoma State University (OSU) with a degree in animal science, Cassidy is currently attending law school at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa, with a focus in agricultural law and policy.

Caroline Cowles



For Caroline Cowles of Rockfield, Ky., the Angus journey started with a cow, 1059, born the same year she was born.

After an extensive and successful show career, Cowles was the last announced to the NJAB at the 2018 NJAS in Madison, Wis. She earned the title of NJAB communications director the following year. The daughter of Gil and Mary Cowles says her teammates have had her back their entire term, and they all want to help each other succeed.

Cowles says she has enjoyed networking across the industry and becoming friends with juniors from all over the United States. Thanks to her time on the NJAB, she says she has found her voice and become a stronger, more confident young woman.

Currently attending OSU studying biochemistry and molecular biology, Cowles plans to attend medical school to one day become a dermatologist.

She would also like to continue growing her family's Angus herd.

At the state level, Cowles says, she wants to give back to the Kentucky Junior Angus Association and pour into their outstanding junior members for years to come.

Cowles leaves junior members with this sentiment from Cory Watt, "Always, always, always do your best, and let God do the rest."

Dylan Denny



After attending his first NJAS in 2011, Dylan Denny of Lubbock, Texas, says he aspired to serve as one of the "green coats" he admired so much.

The son of Don and Wendy Denny earned a spot on the NJAB and then set his sights on Foundation director, a title he would gain the following year. He credits his time on the board with helping him mature faster and navigate his freshman year of college.

Denny says serving on the NJAB has been one of the most gratifying experiences he's ever been a part of. From working the ring at livestock shows to facilitating Leaders Engaged in Angus Development (LEAD) and Raising the Bar conferences, he says his time on the NJAB was nothing short of a dream.

"Every single show or conference I go to, every single time is different, but it's so much fun," Denny says. "While it's hard work, and you are there for the juniors, it's so gratifying

Continued on page 160

being able to serve the Angus breed with some of my closest friends on the board.”

After graduating from OSU with a bachelor’s degree in agribusiness, Denny says, he sees himself pursuing a career in business or sales and eventually moving back to Lubbock to manage his family’s herd.

Grady Dickerson



Grady Dickerson of Paradise, Kan., has deep roots in the Angus breed, dating back to the 20th century, when his ancestors immigrated to

Kansas close to George Grant, the man who first brought the Angus breed to the United States.

Though Dickerson’s time as NJAB leadership director has come to an end, he says the lessons learned will stick with him long after taking off his green coat for the last time. The son of David and Stephanie Dickerson says he has learned effective teamwork and collaboration from his time on the board.

“What I’ve learned is everybody brings a different idea to the table, and I think a lot of leaders and people who work on teams realize that,” he says. “But what I think I didn’t realize is how people communicate with each other and bring those ideas together. Learning how to work with various communication styles is one of the most useful things I’ve learned on the board.”

Attending Fort Hays State University studying biology and

secondary education, Dickerson plans to become a high school science teacher after graduation.

Additionally, he plans to stay

involved with his family’s Angus operation and eventually serve as a Kansas Junior Angus Association advisor.

Tyler Bush

Advice to juniors: Don't be afraid to push yourself. If you're at home, you're tired and don't want to work on your animals or don't want to do your project, that one day can make a difference. Give it your all every single time you go out to do something.

Fun Fact: I have asthma and always have to carry an inhaler. My dad calls me bubble boy.

Baxter Knapp

Advice to juniors: Jump in headfirst and go for everything. Don't be scared to try new things or meet someone new. If you jump in head first and give it your all, the breed is going to give you so much more than you could ever ask.

Fun Fact: The only bone I've ever broken in my body is my collar bone.

Keegan Cassady

Advice to juniors: This Association is huge, and we're lucky it's so big because that means there is something for everyone. Find what you're interested in, and see what you enjoy. Always try new things and get involved.

Fun fact: When I was younger, I figure skated competitively.

Caroline Cowles

Advice to juniors: Go to that junior nationals. Go to LEAD conference. Go to Raising the Bar conference. Go and do everything you can. I can't emphasize enough getting yourself out there and making yourself uncomfortable.

Fun fact: I have never shown anything other than a black cow. I found Angus, and I've stuck with it.

Dylan Denny

Advice to juniors: Go do the mentor program at NJAS because you truly get to meet people and make those connections at a really young age. It gets you to break out of your shell. This is truly an Angus family. Everyone in this Association welcomes you with open arms.

Fun fact: I am an avid golfer. My dad and I golfed every single Angus tournament they put on.

Grady Dickerson

Advice to juniors: If your state advisor or your parents ask you to go and try a contest you don't think you're going to like, go and do it anyway. Meet new people and have new experiences.

Fun fact: I didn't know how to ride a bike until I was 20 years old.

