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NATIONAL JUNIOR ANGUS SHOW

Genuine Motivation

Hinrichsen earns 2021 Jim Baldrige Outstanding Leadership Award

by Miranda Reiman, senior associate editor

Is a drive to achieve something a person is born with or a learned behavior?

It's hard to determine with Eva Hinrichsen — it's just very clear she has it. The 20-year-old Angus breeder from Westmoreland, Kan., doesn't know any other way. Set a goal, reach it, repeat.

"My aunt bought me my membership when I was born, so I was basically born into the Angus breed," she says.

From the first time Hinrichsen led Miss B, her brother's original show heifer, she was hooked.

"When he started, I kind of started, too. I was always out in the barn helping him," Hinrichsen says.

Parents Ron and Lynne Hinrichsen instilled work ethic and the definition of a job well done, but it was some healthy rivalry with her brother Cale, just two years her senior, that really pushed her toward accomplishments.

"Our family is always competitive. Yes, my brother and I were competitive with each other, but then we also supported each other," Hinrichsen says. "When he would accomplish something, I would be so happy for him and support him,



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— Eva Hinrichsen

and when I would do it, he would support me."

That built-in encouragement has also been helpful when either of them has missed out on a job they wanted to land, an award they had their eye on or show ring aspirations that went unmet.

"We understand each other," she says. "We make each other feel better and we're like, 'All right, what's the next goal? Let's start working on that one.'"

The list of awards and honors is long: Kansas Junior Angus Association (KJAA) vice president, Kansas Angus Ambassador and Kansas Angus Queen. It includes everything from first place wins in National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) contests like career development

and team sales to being selected the Kansas Northwest District FFA president and earning the prestigious McKnight Scholars Leadership award at Oklahoma State University (OSU).

A pleasant surprise

Now Hinrichsen can add 2021 Jim Baldrige Outstanding Leadership Award to her tally, a National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) honor her brother quietly nominated her for.

"They were describing the winner of this award and my best friend turns to me and says, 'Huh, kind of sounds like you,'" Hinrichsen reflects.

Before she had time to connect any dots, her name was being called.

"As a member of the [NJAA], Eva participated in numerous programs, contests and shows. There were

numerous people along the way to give her advice and coach her in being better prepared,” said brother Cale Hinrichsen in his nomination letter. He noted she’s had much success in the contests and the show ring. “She never forgot what others did for her, and dedicated her time to getting others involved as well as helping them along the way.”

This spring Eva hosted showmanship clinics at their farm to coach 4-H youth who were unable to get show ring experience at the early jackpots due to COVID-19 cancellations.

“Eva loves to participate in showmanship because the focus is more on the teamwork of the exhibitor and animal,” her brother said.

Sixteen youth benefited from her experience.

That role of mentor and leader seems to come naturally to the younger Hinrichsen, but it’s also a responsibility she takes seriously.

“There’s this quote on social media that I really like: ‘Be the girl you used to look up to,’ and so I try to do that,” she says.

In fall of 2019, Hinrichsen was crowned Miss American Angus, a title that put her in the shoes of people who had served as role models to her early on. She still channels her inner Paige Wallace or Jacy Lippoldt today.

“Even when you don’t think people are watching you, people are watching you,” Hinrichsen says. “Always try to make the right decisions and the right choices. I think that exemplifies being a leader.”

It also means facing disappointments with grace. One by one her responsibilities with the crown dropped off the schedule as the pandemic wore on.

“She found other ways to connect with the membership, reaching out via social media through video posts,” said Anne Lampe, longtime Kansas Angus Association secretary, in her letter of support. “[Eva] is a genuine and responsible role model and mentor for young KJAA members.”

Hinrichsen is pursuing a degree in animal science at OSU, with her eye on a master’s in ruminant nutrition. She credits raising cattle and representing the Angus breed with her well-rounded view of the industry.

There isn’t a lot Hinrichsen sets out to do that she doesn’t accomplish, but she wants the younger crowd to know she’s “just a real person.”

“I’ve always tried to be transparent and be the most down-to-earth, and genuine person I can be,” Hinrichsen says.

High achievers can sometimes intimidate, but she wants to be one who motivates. Whether that’s a learned behavior or an innate trait matters not to those she’s influenced. They simply see that she is. **AJ**

