

PASSING THE TORCH

The six retiring National Junior Angus Board members' reflections and future endeavors.

by Elizabeth Rosson, editorial intern

Like true guardians of the Plains, anyone elected to the National Junior Angus Board (NJAB) must embrace their role with dedication and a vision, harnessing their superpowers of passion, commitment and innovation to serve junior members across the nation.

Just two years ago, six individuals stood amongst the crowd during the closing ceremonies at the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS), brimming with anticipation as they awaited news of their election. Fast forward to the present, these same members retire their iconic green coats in the very place where their journey began in 2021 — Grand Island, Neb.

As they reflect on their experiences, they offer advice and insight to the incoming board members who are slated to continue the tradition of serving fellow junior members.

J. GORDON CLARK

As retiring vice chairman, J. Gordon Clark, has come to realize *The Business Breed* embodies qualities of passion, determination and strong bonds with family.

For the last 12 years, he has been deeply involved with the Association and the show ring.

The initial motivation to serve on the board was driven by his desire to give back to the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA), which he

says played a large role in shaping his life from his youth to adulthood.

His love for the industry has been family-centered from the beginning and only grew larger after his two years on the board. The experience allowed him to dive deeper into the behind-the-scenes workings of the cattle industry and provided valuable professional development on a personal level.

“The main impact I wanted to make was on the juniors,” Clark says. “That is the purpose of the NJAB, interacting with and having awesome experiences with the kids that keep our Association alive.”

Collaborating with his team to plan this year’s NJAS, he witnessed newfound levels of teamwork and took pride in the seamless way they all came together.

To the incoming board members and the entire junior membership,

Clark offers this advice: “Your time will go by fast. Cherish the people you serve with; be intentional with the relationships you make.”

His journey serving on the highest level of the NJAA has been one that he considers to be one of his life’s greatest accomplishments, topped only by the chance to create a new family tradition.

“One of the coolest moments I experienced was after completing my term when I had the opportunity to pass on my green coat to my younger brother, Suter, in Grand Island,” Clark says.

KATHRYN COLEMAN



For Kathryn Coleman, the green coat carries profound significance. She says it represents being a role model, mentor and friend to younger juniors — a task that continues even after its put back on the hanger.

Since her first encounter with the NJAB, she has aspired to secure a seat on the board.

“To be elected two years ago felt like I had been given an opportunity of a lifetime,” Coleman says. “Now retiring in the very place I was elected, I feel as if I have accomplished a dream of mine.”

Every tough moment and all the hard work was worth it for the retiring events director. Remembering the motto “for the juniors” was the key to a successful tenure for Coleman.



NATIONAL JUNIOR ANGUS SHOW

Serving on the board has also allowed her to gain a broader perspective of the Association. During board meetings, her six had the chance to explore each department, discuss future plans, understand current initiatives and gain insight into how breeding programs were addressing challenges within the industry.

One of Coleman's favorite projects was spearheading a pitch for the Leaders Engaged in Angus Development (LEAD) conference to be hosted in her home state of California. She's been actively involved in planning the conference alongside her NJAB advisors.

To the incoming board members, Coleman encourages them to dedicate themselves to the role, maintaining a positive outlook through it all.

Coleman's role as events director allowed her to enhance her confidence in communication and coordination of efforts. She believes these skills will serve her well as she pursues her graduate degree and ventures to new opportunities.

"I didn't know what to expect going on the board; however, I can fullheartedly say I am not the same person I was when I was elected," she testifies. "I can't imagine where I'd be without this experience given to me by the NJAA."

KINSEY CROWE

While serving on the NJAB, Kinsey Crowe gained a wealth of industry knowledge and learned how to persevere through all life throws at her. Throughout this journey, Crowe has pushed the boundaries of her



communication abilities. Whether announcing at shows, speaking in front of hundreds of members or talking with individual breeders, she was able to help bridge the gap between the association and its junior members.

"I've learned a lot, and my understanding of the Angus industry has grown so much through these two years," she says. "I have a better appreciation of how our breed impacts so many others in feedlots and commercial settings, and how that is impacting what the American Angus Association does with programs."

Crowe expresses gratitude for the opportunity to represent and lead an organization that played a role in shaping her fondest memories and fostering lifelong friendships.

The green coat, to her, is more than a piece of clothing. It embodies teamwork and a bond between a group of individuals united for a collective cause, an expectation she is confident her group lived up to.

"I'm so proud of how, as a group of 12 individuals, we came together and put on one of the largest cattle shows in the world," Crowe says. "This was the first NJAS hosted by the NJAA Board of Directors, and I'm immensely proud of my 12 and how well it turned out."

As the new NJAB steps into their

positions, Crowe advises them to savor each moment, brush off minor setbacks and embrace the pure joy that accompanies this unique experience, because it goes by quickly.

AVERY DULL

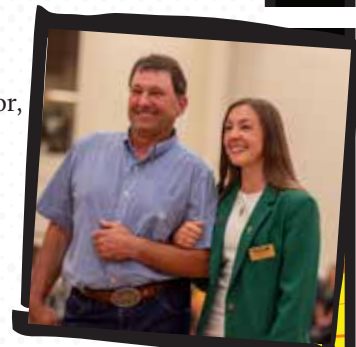
Avery Dull, departing NJAB education director, emphasizes the deep meaning she attaches to her role on the NJAB. While board members leave their own mark on the NJAA, Dull says selfless leadership is the common thread among all NJAB members.

Long before her election two years ago, Dull decided to pursue a position on the board. Her fundamental goal was to include all members, regardless of their past accomplishments or social status.

"If I could positively impact the life of just one junior, I would consider my time on the board a success," she says. "Growing up, I admired junior board members who radiated a welcoming spirit, and I only hope I was able to uphold that tradition during my tenure on the board."

Her advice to the junior membership is to savor their experiences.

For the next group stepping up, she says, "Take as many photos as you can along the way. It's very easy to get caught up in the hustle and bustle of working with juniors and adults of this association, but you never truly realize the impact you



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made until all that's left are photos to prove it."

Representing the NJAA has provided her with invaluable lessons, from navigating airports solo to collaborating with a large team.

"One of the biggest things I have learned since serving my two years on the board is how to communicate and connect with other people on a personal level," she says, "whether they are 5 years old or 55 years old."

Currently studying to get her doctor of veterinary medicine degree, balancing NJAB responsibilities and maintaining academic standing was no easy task for the Maryland native. However, her ambition shone through.

Often, this meant showing up at the airport three hours early while traveling to Angus events just to log studying hours — a commitment that she says was well worth it.

With this mindset, I not only grew professionally, but personally."

While growing up in the NJAA was a learning experience, her time on the national board has pushed the envelope and stretched her to new heights.

Harward considers herself lucky to have gotten to serve in the Foundation position during the 150th anniversary of Angus in America. This milestone opened up doors for her to speak with members about NJAA and be involved in the events like the Ranchers' Revelry this past summer.

Outside of industry events and planning, Harward is grateful for the fresh perspective that comes with service on the NJAB.

"You learn skills that you will use in everyday life," she explains. "The board was more than just helping in the ring. You not only learn about your team, but you are able to learn about yourself and how you can be your best self to help the team."

She is confident as she steps into the next chapter of her story she will be able to find success because of serving the membership these last two years.

Harward encourages juniors to never be afraid to put themselves out there. To the new six board members, her advice is to seize every opportunity that comes their way.

"Always remember your 'why' and your purpose," she adds. "If you remember those two things with everything you do, you will be able to accomplish anything."

NICOLE STEVENSON

This year's board was the first to host the NJAS. In Nicole Stevenson's mind, the teamwork exhibited by



the NJAB was the best moment of her term as chairman. Preparing for the NJAS was an opportunity to lean on her six, and Stevenson said their ability to rally together allowed them to accomplish a long list of goals.

There's more to the green coat than just the NJAS, however. Stevenson says her two years provided the opportunity to learn about the Angus industry. She says she's grateful for the time she got to spend meeting the dedicated producers who play a vital role in the prominence of the Angus breed.

"Serving on the National Junior Angus Board allowed me to expand my horizons," Stevenson says. "I was pushed out of my comfort zone and broke out of my shell as a shy, timid junior."

She encourages juniors to explore the Association and attend events and contests whenever the opportunity presents itself.

As she heads into her next phase of life, working back home on her family's ranch in Montana, she is thankful for her membership and upbringing in NJAA.

Her advice to the new board members is simple.

"When the days get long, or challenges seem impassable, take a moment to remember what motivated you to run for the NJAB, and who you are there for," Stevenson says. "Staying focused on the junior membership will keep you inspired and make your service meaningful." **AJ**



MARCIE HARWARD

"The green coat is more than just a position," says Marcie Harward, retiring Foundation director. "Every day, whether the jacket is on or off, your actions reflect that green jacket."