

by Julie Mais  
Editor



## Teamwork and tennis shoes

*It's a Saturday morning in January 1995. Instead of watching a few cartoons before changing into chore clothes, I pull on my gym shorts and mid-calf socks scrunched down just above my white tennis shoes.*

I tuck in my new blue “youth basketball league” t-shirt with this year’s latest logo of a swoosh.

Our team in the first- and second-grade division had practiced a few times, learning the fundamentals of passing, shooting, rebounding and defense. We each have a role to play on the court. As the referee tosses the ball up in the middle of the court, the coaching, the instruction goes out the window. Those little basketball players have only one thing on their mind — get the orange ball. Everywhere the basketball goes, a herd donned in squeaky tennis shoes follows.

Fast-forward 10 years, some of those players grew into decent athletes. We understood positions, executed plays and worked together within our roles on the court to win games. On our small, rural, high school team we learned how to capitalize on and accommodate each others’ strengths and weaknesses. We each brought something unique in skill and teamwork.

Diversity promotes problem-

solving and innovation. Understanding the strength in diversity and inclusion makes more effective teams.

From businesses to volunteer organizations, embracing diversity can spur creativity.

“Strength lies in differences, not in similarities,” wrote Stephen Covey, author of the book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*.

### All shapes and sizes

This type of diversity was showcased at this year’s National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) in Grand Island, Neb. Youth from across the country, from different backgrounds, with different goals and interests, were brought together by a common passion — the Angus breed.

As I talked with families, I found each was unique in their interests and pursuits at the event. Some came to compete only in the contests; for

others, the show ring was their goal. There’s a place for those who focus on carcass quality in their herds,

and the Phenotype and Genotype Show rewards juniors for their focus on genetic selection as well. This issue gives you a full recap of the week’s events from “The Guardians of the Plains.”

The NJAS is a snapshot of the breed’s diversity among cattle and operations across the country. This month’s *Angus Journal*, “All Shapes and Sizes,” highlights the importance of diversity and the different roles Angus breeders play in the industry.

“Every individual matters. Every individual has a role to play. Every individual makes a difference.”

— Jane Goodall 

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads “Julie”.

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