

Jim Dismukes II, Wilton, Calif., captured the coveted title of “Top Showman” during the 33rd National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest, July 11-12 in Tulsa, Okla. A total of 48 contestants from 28 states competed for top honors.

In addition to the title of “Top Showman,” Dismukes received \$350.

Rhonda Nida, Red Rock, Okla., placed second and received \$250. Tanya Peebles, Lawrenceville, Va., placed third and received \$175.

Jeff Dalbey, Burlington Junction, Mo., placed fourth and won \$125. Melanie Meiburg, North Branch, Mich., received \$100 for her fifth-place finish.

The cash prizes awarded to the top five showmanship winners are provided on behalf of the Hamilton James Memorial Fund, established in memory of Angus enthusiast and auctioneer Ham James.

JIM DISMUKES CLAIMS CHAMPION SHOWMAN TITLE

The American Angus Auxiliary presented each of the top five finalists with a silver Revere bowl.

The contestants are evaluated on their skill in handling the animal, their ability to follow instructions, use of equipment, courtesy and sportsmanship, and general appearance. The contestants did not show their own animals; they drew for animals owned by other exhibitors at the show.

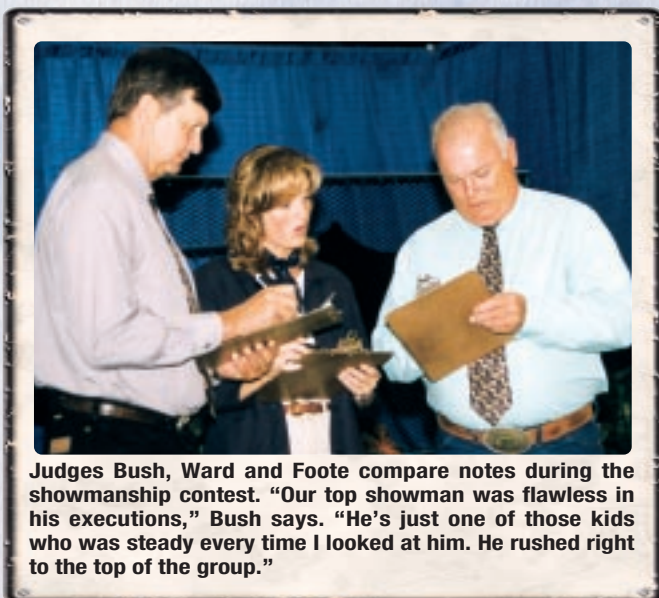
The judges for the event were James Bush, Britton, S.D.; E.G. Foote Jr., Melba, Idaho; and Mary Ann Ward, Lagrange, Ind.

“It was a very tough group to separate,” Bush says. “We looked for showmen who were comfortable with their animal and quick on the stick. We tried to find balanced showmen who displayed enthusiasm.”

The contestants competed in four preliminary rounds before 15 finalists were named. The 15 finalists competed in the final round for the top honors.

Other contestants who rounded out the top 15 were Mandy Bauman, Eureka, Ill.; Coy Claussen, Tipton, Iowa; Cody Sankey, Council Grove, Kan.; Brian Meier, Jackson, Mo.; Kami Krebs, Gordon, Neb.; Betsie Ebert, Lexington, N.C.; Stephanie Mullett, Coshocton, Ohio; Michelle Gunderson, Baltic, S.D.; Sy Olson, Hereford, Texas; and Jon Wright, Philippi, W.Va.

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Judges Bush, Ward and Foote compare notes during the showmanship contest. “Our top showman was flawless in his executions,” Bush says. “He’s just one of those kids who was steady every time I looked at him. He rushed right to the top of the group.”



Top five showmen in the 1999 National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest (pictured l to r) are **Jim Dismukes II**, Wilton, Calif., first; **Rhonda Nida**, Red Rock, Okla., second; **Tanya Peebles**, Lawrenceville, Va., third; **Jeff Dalbey**, Burlington Junction, Mo., fourth; and **Melanie Meiburg**, North Branch, Mich., fifth.



SHOWMANSHIP WINNERS

Top 15 contestants are (pictured front row, l to r) **Jeff Dalbey**, Burlington Junction, Mo.; **Kami Krebs**, Gordon, Neb.; **Rhonda Nida**, Red Rock, Okla.; **Tanya Peebles**, Lawrenceville, Va.; (pictured middle row, l to r) **Mandy Bauman**, Eureka, Ill.; **Melanie Meiburg**, North Branch, Mich.; **Michelle Gunderson**, Baltic, S.D.; **Betsie Ebert**, Lexington, N.C.; **Stephanie Mullett**, Coshocton, Ohio; (pictured back row, l to r) **Brian Meier**, Jackson, Mo.; **Jim Dismukes II**, Wilton, Calif.; **Sy Olson**, Hereford, Texas; **Coy Claussen**, Tipton, Iowa; **Jon Wright**, Philippi, W.Va.; and **Cody Sankey**, Council Grove, Kan.

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he best way to get the job done is to do it yourself.

Jim Dismukes II, Wilton, Calif., proved the truth behind this statement when he took home the honors of “Top Showman” from the 1999 National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest.

From the beginning of his junior Angus career, Jim was destined to be a cattleman. While his parents, Jim Dismukes and Linda Dismukes, supported his dreams, they didn’t share his passion for the industry. Everything Jim has accomplished has been from his own hard work and careful planning.

He took out his first loan from the bank when he was 9 years old to buy two steers. At the end of the year, when he sold his steers, he had made enough money to pay back his loan and to purchase a heifer to show the next year. Jim continued this process of selling his steers to buy new heifers in order to build up his herd, which now consists of 45 cows. There are only two cows left in the herd today that were not produced by Jim himself.

Even as a child, Jim impressed fellow Angus breeders with his intensity and devotion to his cattle. Jim Vietheer, owner of HAVE Angus Ranch in Wilton, Calif., met Jim when he was a young boy. Their relationship grew, and Jim spent most of his high-school career working alongside Vietheer. Today they run their cows together, but operate their own breeding programs.

“I have a lot of faith in Jim,” Vietheer says. “I’ve tried to help him reach his goals by exposing

A SELF-STARTER

Jim Dismukes II, winner of the 1999 National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest, is proof you don't have to be born with a showstick in hand to be a natural-born showman.



him to different breeders so he could discover new ways of thinking. Jim uses these experiences to blend his persona about the cow business.”

Perseverance pays

Through his experiences showing cattle, Jim has learned that perseverance and dedication are key to accomplishing goals. “You can never give up,” Jim says. “Sometimes you’ll feel discouraged, but the satisfaction of holding onto your dreams and accomplishing them is worth it.”

He admits that showing cattle is not always easy. “There were many shows that I went home from feeling frustrated because I couldn’t compete with the \$10,000 heifers in my classes,” he says. “But I learned to set my sights on the next show and work even harder to get my cattle looking better than they did at the last show.”

Describing his first show experience, Jim says he has come a long way. “Dad and I went to a little jackpot show with my steer,” he recalls. “We had no idea what we were getting into. I showed up with

my steer and a brush. Luckily someone helped us clip our steer and fit him for the show.”

Since his first show, he has created a foundation for his future through his experiences in the showring. In addition to managing his own Angus ranch, he now has a custom fitting service through which he helps people groom cattle for shows, sales and other events. Jim’s ability to evaluate cattle, emphasize their strengths and downplay their weaknesses has been nurtured by watching other showmen.

Learning from others

“I’ve always been interested in improving my showmanship techniques by watching other people,” he says. “I also like to ask people what they think I could do better the next time. I try to figure out what techniques the judges are looking for as well.”

One of Jim’s role models in the ring is Heather Kalino of Elk Grove, Calif. She was the top showman in the 1993 National Angus Showmanship Contest. She believes Jim’s style in the ring sets him apart from others.

“He has this finesse in the ring that allows him to show a heifer like there’s no tomorrow,” Kalino says. “We’ve been friends since he started showing cattle. At the same time, we’ve always been very competitive against each other. I’m just glad I wasn’t in the ring with him at Tulsa.”

Jim says the best showmen are the people who know their cattle inside and out. “You have to spend time with your cattle,” he says. “You need to understand them and discover what they like and don’t like. There’s more to showing cattle than walking around a ring.”

Competing nationally

Jim says he didn't prepare any differently than normal for the national showmanship contest. "I believe the preparation for this contest started at the first show I attended," he says. "I kept my same style that I've always used and tried to stay calm in the ring."

Showmanship judge Jim Bush, Britton, S.D., says Jim quickly stood out among his rivals. "He had this demeanor about him like he had done this before and this was just another showmanship contest," Bush says. "You hardly knew he was in the ring because he never drew attention to himself. He was so quick and accurate with his showstick. Every movement he made was fluid and professional."

The judges said they wanted to find a showman who had a lot of experience and worked hard with the cattle. "We all agreed that he was the most balanced showman of all," Bush says. "I don't think any of us had a negative mark on his scorecard."

Good showmen never allow the pressure of the moment to affect their ability to show their animals. Judge Mary Ann Ward, Lagrange, Ind., says, "Jim had great composure. He always was in control of his animal. If he was having a hard time, he never showed it."

In a situation such as the national showmanship contest where the showman exhibits another person's heifer, Jim advises juniors to assess their animal's flaws before entering the ring.

"Once you understand her weaknesses, figure out what you should do to correct those weaknesses with your

showmanship techniques," he says. "Then when you get in the ring, keep a firm grip on the lead and get your heifer's attention. Find the part of the heifer's body that she likes scratched and take her mind off being nervous."

When you're out in the ring, you need to draw attention to your animal, Jim says. "Stay out of the judges' way and let them have a clear view of your animal. I like to give them the picture look — the one where they can imagine themselves standing behind your heifer in the grand champion picture," he says.

Enjoyment shows

Wendy Hall, livestock photographer and owner of COWFOTO in Arroyo Grande, Calif., has been one of Jim's greatest supporters. She says his love for cattle becomes evident when he's in the showring.

"I've seen so many kids go through the motions in the ring, but Jimmy's not one of those kids," Hall says. "It comes natural for him. He's not mechanical in the ring, and that's what separates the great showmen from the mediocre. His ability to understand and evaluate cattle combined with his level of comfort in the ring have made him one of the best showmen I've ever judged."

For 11 years Jim worked hard to accomplish his goals in the showring. Looking back on his last junior show, he's now able to say he feels relieved.

"I've always dreamed about winning this contest," he says. "I've strived to be my best in hopes that someday I could feel the way I feel now."



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— Heather Kalino

