

'Celebrating the Vision'

First-ever Foundation Reception received with overwhelming support, a few surprises.

Story & photos by *Crystal Albers*

It was a first for the Angus Foundation and an overwhelming success. With an amazing \$55,000 in donations and, for one Angus breeder, a once-in-a-lifetime honor, the Angus Foundation Reception made its debut Saturday evening, Nov. 15, as part of Angus activities during the North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE).

The steady hum of conversation and a warm, inviting atmosphere greeted approximately 200 Angus Foundation donors as they gathered in the Executive West hotel in Louisville, Ky. Guests made their way around the long table of hors d'oeuvres, while the No. 1 print of Frank Champion Murphy's "In Apple Blossom Time" stood near the front of the room, highlighted by a banner proclaiming the evening's theme, "Celebrating the Vision."

The print was the main fund-raiser for the night, to be auctioned later that evening to benefit the Angus Foundation. Many guests admired the print before taking their seats for the auction, but a group of 58 Angus breeders and enthusiasts weren't about to let the print go easily — they had plans for the artwork.

A surprise donation

As Abbie Nelson, 2002-2003 Angus Foundation president, welcomed the crowd,



► Dave McMahon thanks the group for the print. Later, McMahon donated the print to be hung in the Association headquarters in Saint Joseph, Mo.

the buzz of conversation subsided. The audience listened as Nelson recognized past Foundation donors and distinguished guests, described some of the organization's history and explained the vision of the Foundation — a vision to advance Angus youth, education and research.

As auctioneer Roger Jacobs, Shepherd, Mont., stepped on stage and began taking bids on the print, the banquet quickly began to resemble a sale barn. One bid after another rolled in, and with every subtle nod of the head or flick of the wrist, the bidding quickly edged upward to \$40,000.

Finally, Jacobs shouted, "Sold," and

motioned for Doug Dalton, owner of Daltons on the Sycamore, Gretna, Va., to claim the print. Dalton edged through the applauding crowd and toward the podium. But rather than accepting the \$40,000 print, Dalton presented the newly purchased artwork to Dave McMahon, owner of Belle Point Ranch, Lavaca, Ark., on behalf of the group. Dalton said the group wanted to honor McMahon for his dedication to Angus youth and the Angus Foundation.

"He is and always has been the leader in supporting the Foundation, whether it be the Foundation Heifer in Denver, or any other program," Dalton said. "He takes on the leadership role of raising money for any of these causes, and he does it by example first."

Dalton said anyone involved in the junior program knows McMahon and the lifetime commitment he has made to Angus youth and to the Foundation.

"You do something for me, and I appreciate it, and I thank you. You do something for my children, and I'm indebted to you for life," Dalton said. Turning to McMahon, he continued, "And, Dave, you have done so much for my children. And anybody who knows you is aware of your leadership, your participation and your commitment to the junior program nationwide. Angus breeders and families all across the country are indebted to you as well."



► A group of 58 Angus breeders paid \$40,000 for the No. 1 print of Frank Champion Murphy's "In Apple Blossom Time." The group bought the print at the first-ever Angus Foundation Reception and presented it to McMahon, owner of Belle Point Ranch, Lavaca, Ark., in honor of his contributions to Angus youth and the Angus Foundation.



►Key speakers and guests for the Foundation Reception included (from left) Dave McMahon, Frank and Evelyn Murphy, Mary Ann McMahon, NJAA Chairman Jennifer Beck, and Executive Vice President John Crouch.

The crowd burst into applause as the man known for his generosity, outgoing personality and signature lightweight, tan jacket and khaki pants accompanied his wife, Mary Ann, to the stage to accept the print. A surprised McMahon gave a heartfelt thank you before donating the print to the Association, to be hung at the headquarters in Saint Joseph, Mo.

"If cows were so important, we wouldn't eat them," McMahon joked. "It's us, it's the people. We're the difference between the Hereford breed — it's not CAB® (*Certified Angus Beef*®), it's not the work all of us do that we think is so important, it's not ultrasound — it's us. We're what makes it great."

Raising funds

Paul Hill, American Angus Association Board member and newly elected Angus Foundation president, said it was easy to find people willing to donate money to honor McMahon. Hill began contacting other breeders about buying the print, and in just two days, Hill had found 58 Angus breeders and supporters who agreed to donate a collective \$40,000 to honor McMahon.

"Everyone we contacted, and even some people we hadn't contacted, heard about it and agreed, and before long we were at \$40,000," he said. "When things are for the

Foundation donors honor fellow breeder

Fifty-eight Angus donors paid a total of \$40,000 for the No. 1 print of "In Apple Blossom Time," at the first Angus Foundation Reception. The breeders presented the painting to fellow breeder Dave McMahon, owner of Belle Point Ranch, Lavaca, Ark., in honor of his contributions to Angus youth and the Angus Foundation. Foundation supporters who purchased the print include:

American Angus Hall of Fame,
Smithville, Mo.
Angus Semen Service, Purcellville, Va.
Arntzen Angus Ranch, Hilger, Mont.
B&L Properties, Vacaville, Calif.
Biozyme Inc., Saint Joseph, Mo.
BLC Angus Ranch, Tecumseh, Okla.
Boyd Beef Cattle, Mays Lick, Ky.
Champion Hill, Bidwell, Ohio
Circle A Ranch, Iberia, Mo.
Clark Angus Ranch, Houston, Texas
Conley Angus Farm, Clarksdale, Mo.
Al Conover, Baxter, Iowa
Cotton & Associates, Howell, Mich.
Drew and Adam Cotton, Saint Joseph, Mo.
Da-Es-Ro, Columbus Junction, Iowa
Daltons on the Sycamore, Gretna, Va.
Dameron Angus Farm, Lexington, Ill.
Dawn Acres, West Friendship, Md.
Dick Beck Professional Marketing,
Red Lodge, Mont.
Dobson Pulpwood Farms, Campiti, La.
Tom and Judi Drake, Davis, Okla.
Mark Duffell, Aldie, Va.
Bill and Jane Ebert, Sparta, N.C.
Robert Elliott & Sons Angus, Adams, Tenn.
ErReR Hill Farms, Friedens, Pa.
Falcon Seaboard Ranches,
Fredericksburg, Texas
Five Star Land & Livestock, Wilton, Calif.
Fretwell Angus Farms, Monticello, Mo.
Gardiner Angus Ranch, Ashland, Kan.

Harding & Harding, Geneva, Ill.
Dean and Gloria Hurlbut, Saint Joseph, Mo.
Keeter's Triple K, Stilwell, Okla.
KMK Acres, Thompsons Station, Tenn.
LaGrand Angus & Hereford Ranch, Freeman,
S.D.
Lathrop Livestock Transportation,
Dundee, Ill.
Lynn Brae Farms, Roanoke, Va.
Macedon Farms, Madison, Ala.
Pheasant Trek, Wilton, Calif.
Richard Riesenbeck, Hannibal, Mo.
Rodrock Cattle Co., Bucyrus, Kan.
Rollin' Rock, Sidney, Mont.
Sauk Valley Angus, Rock Falls, Ill.
Anne and Gordon Schubert, Taylorsville, Ky.
Shady Brook Angus Farm, Leoma, Tenn.
Quintin Smith family, Lebanon, Tenn.
Spur Ranch, Vinita, Okla.
Stevenson-Basin, Hobson, Mont.
Stinson, Morrison, Hecker, LLP,
Kansas City, Mo.
Fred Stivers, Troy, Ohio
Sugar Hill Farms, Fort Smith, Ark.
Summitcrest, Summitville, Ohio
Sydenstricker Genetics, Mexico, Mo.
TC Ranch, Franklin, Neb.
Thomas Angus Ranch, Baker City, Ore.
Weiker Angus, Fayette, Mo.
Whitestone Farm, Aldie, Va.
Fred and Shirley Williams, Fort Smith, Ark.
Woodlawn Farms, Creston, Ill.

right reason, it's easy, and Dave has been the most dedicated supporter of the Foundation since the beginning. Every time there's something to support youth and youth education, Dave has not only supported it, he has also encouraged his friends and associates to become involved.

"Dave McMahon is a person who surely isn't looking for any recognition," Hill said, "but there's not a more deserving person."

Leading by example

McMahon didn't allow the donations to end there, however. After everyone settled back into their seats, a second auction began. This time, the bidding was for a custom Frank Murphy sketch of any Angus bull or cow. Again, the bidding began immediately, only this time McMahon was leading the bids. He purchased the sketch for \$15,000, but added his own twist. Instead of wanting a sketch of his cattle, McMahon requested that Murphy sketch a portrait of Dick and Sheri Spader in memory of the former Association executive vice president.

The request didn't surprise Dalton. "He is a role model for everyone inclined to support junior activities and junior scholarships across the country," Dalton said. "Because of his passion and his giving nature, Dave is the leadership example. I can assure you, he will continue to give to and support the Foundation and youth activities in every way possible for years to come."

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Want to participate in the next Foundation event?

Angus breeders and enthusiasts hoping to support the Angus Foundation can attend the next fund-raising event — the auctioning of the Angus Foundation Heifer package Thursday, Jan. 15, at the National Western Stock Show (NWSS) in Denver, Colo.

However, James Fisher, director of activities and junior activities, says Angus supporters shouldn't worry if they can't make it to Denver.

"There are plenty of opportunities to give to the Angus Foundation," Fisher said. "People can make individual contributions or donations at any time, not just at special events."

And although no definite plans have been made for what item will be auctioned at next year's Angus Foundation Reception, Fisher said people wanting to attend the reception should get their names on the invitation list.

"And there's only one way to do that," he said. "Be sure to get your name on the donor list."

Angus art icon shares inspiration for painting

Frank Champion Murphy couldn't believe his eyes. The longtime Angus artist, known in cattle circles for his vivid imagery of Angus cattle and Angus living, watched as the No. 1 print of his latest work, "In Apple Blossom Time," was auctioned at the 2003 Angus Foundation Reception Saturday, Nov. 15. The print quickly sold for \$40,000.

"That's, as they say, awesome — not a term I use often, but I was impressed," he said. "I was wonderfully impressed to think my work could bring that much money for the Foundation. It's very gratifying."

Murphy gave a brief speech before the auction, explaining the origin of the painting and some of its features. He said the idea for the painting came from American Angus Association public relations and communications director Susan Rhode.

"Susan called and said she would like to have me do a painting. As we talked about it, it developed that she had a family farm with a cow and newborn calf in mind. We wanted to make the mother and the calf the main subject of the painting," Murphy said.

Using photos Rhode had taken at a Virginia farm, Murphy began painting the scene, borrowing the barn and house from a farm near his Wheaton, Ill., home.

"Of course, I gave the cow a calf," Murphy laughed. "In the picture that Susan had taken, the cow didn't have her calf with her at that time, so I put a different calf in there because I didn't have her calf to work with."

Murphy said the painting is unique from others he has completed for the Association.

"In all my paintings for Angus, I had never painted a small, Midwest farm including a barn and farmhouse," he said. "So many people related to that background of the painting, and a lot of them

came up to me after the banquet and told me how much that farm reminded me of their farm or their grandfather's farm. That was very pleasing to hear."

Murphy, who has completed 45 advertisement illustrations, numerous sketches and 32 paintings for the Association since the early 1950s, praised the equally unique character of the Association and its members.

"The Angus Association has just been a part of my life — it's been a big part of my life. And I just can't say enough about the people and the cattle. They're wonderful," he said. "There's a unique thing about Angus people and the Angus Association. I have a theory that excellence breeds excellence, and the excellence of the cattle has brought in some of the finest people in the industry who are just dedicated to Angus cattle."

For Murphy and his wife, Evelyn, the response to the painting was overwhelming.

"It was an experience that probably very few artists are given," he said. "After all, it's been essentially my life's work. I've worked with just about everybody from 1950 on up in the Association, and I've never met more dedicated people in any walk of life or in any industry that I've known and have had the pleasure of working with than the Angus Association. They're remarkable. Everyone in the Association is just of outstanding caliber and it's because, I think, the breed inspires people — it inspires people to have this great enthusiasm."

"I feel I'm just a very lucky person to be here and to be doing this with the Association," Murphy said. "I'm an Angus person, and I have been from the first one that I drew."

