

by Julie Mais
Editor



The ornaments

*The holiday season is often enveloped with hustle and bustle.
Growing up on my family farm, it was no different.*

In early December my parents would take us to our local Christmas tree farm and the three of us kids would pick out a tree with the approval of my dad — the tree's trunk had to be straight.

Once our freshly cut pine was placed in our living room, my mom would bring up the box of ornaments. As she pulled each ornament out of its resting place, my siblings and I would line up to take the ornament she handed us. We would quickly hang them on the tree just to line up again for another.

Each year as the contents of the large Christmas container dwindled down and my mom deemed the tree full, she would pull out that small special box we all knew. Quiet comes over the room. My dad, who usually observed the festivities from his blue recliner, would join my mom to unpack the little box. She would carefully pull out each silver

ornament, exposing their once-shiny surfaces blackened by the flames that touched them years ago. These were the ornaments my parents placed on the tree.

at my grandparents' home to stay that night the house was lost, they found a lovely little dress and a bag of diapers hanging on the doorknob — this small, anonymous gift gave that young family a necessity and my sister something beautiful to wear on Christmas Day.



Hitting home

It was early December in 1985 when my mom got a call at work and learned the news that her home, which her grandparents built in the early 1900s, caught fire. Rural volunteer firefighters rushed to the scene, but not much could be done.

Just about everything inside had been consumed by flames. Over the next few weeks as my parents sifted through the ashes, they were able to find a few items that survived — those Christmas ornaments made that very short list of recovered possessions.

My dad, mom and their 22-month-old daughter, my older sister, received an outpouring of support from the community which they remember even to this day.


In the midst of all the giving, there was one gift that stood out to my mom. As they arrived

Gaining by giving

I'm honored to have grown up in the agricultural community, where helping others is just a way of life. We reflect on 2019 as being a tough year for farmers and ranchers. Without a doubt, out of the ashes, dust and floods come stories of families supporting families and neighbors helping neighbors.

We are proud to share a few stories of Angus families who have done just that. This *Angus Journal* issue, "Gaining by Giving," is filled with inspiring tales.

As another year closes, I encourage you to thank those who have stepped up for you, and to consider ways to help others through the gifts of time and resources.

From all of us on the *Angus Journal* staff and Angus Media team, we wish you a very merry Christmas and happy holidays. 



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