

by Mark McCully
CEO, American Angus Association



The heritage of leadership

There's a black book that sits on my shelf in my office at 3201 Frederick Avenue. The pages are full of the history of the Angus breed. Its scorched and burned corner is a part of the Angus story.

In 1934, it was discovered in the ruin of a fire in the Live Stock Record Building at the Chicago Union Stock Yards. The American Angus Association's offices there burned down and yet, the history of the breed survived on the pages of that book.

Today, cattlemen have the Angus Black Book app that allows everyone in an operation to stay in sync and organized with their herd's records with a simple tap on their smartphone.

When that burned book was recovered, did the leaders of the Angus breed know how far we would come in the next 100 years? Even then, the breed already had a rich history that served as its foundation. Through the years, our leaders have recognized the importance of continually working with an eye on the future.

We're operating today in a business of constant change. Embracing that and always considering new and better ways to do what we do keeps us successful and sustainable for generations to come.

Heritage of progress

But history and the future aren't contradictory to each other. In fact, our heritage is about progress. A look back to any decade in the past — each with their own set of challenges and opportunities — helps us understand the success we have today; but more importantly, it helps guide our steps for the future.




The charred book, entitled *The History of Aberdeen Angus Cattle*, sits on a shelf at 3201 Frederick Avenue.

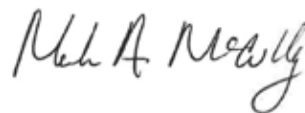
The boards through the late 1940s and early 1950s made tough and controversial decisions on how to deal with artificial insemination (AI). Later in the 1950s Angus breeders embraced recordkeeping and the Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR®) program to put more objective measures in breeding and selection. The Association led the industry with genetic evaluation tools. And in 1978, the leaders of Certified Angus Beef LLC had the audacity to think you could actually brand beef.

The Angus history books are full of tough people, visionary breeders, dedicated leaders, and really hard

decisions all aligned to make the best better. I'm inspired by that. It gives me a great sense of optimism and responsibility to avoid complacency and a sense of entitlement, and to keep pushing forward.

Today, our association is driving the genomics discussion. We have industry-leading data resources with the most robust and complete selection tools in the cattle industry to help breeders improve their herds, and ultimately make their operations even more successful.

Moving forward is not being disrespectful to your past. In fact, the most meaningful way to show reverence for the past, is to build on it. We are progressive today because the leaders before us thought ahead and put us in the position we are now. It's a tradition of innovation that we must uphold. It makes their work worth it, and ours, too. 



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