

Making Dreams Happen

From the barn to downtown Baltimore, Angus Foundation success story, Daniel McFarland works to make his dreams a reality at Johns Hopkins Medicine.

by Karen Hiltbrand, American Angus Association

Every little kid has a dream. For some it's to grow up to be an astronaut, for others it's to be a teacher, or maybe a firefighter. For Keithville, La., native Daniel McFarland, he would say that the dream for himself and his siblings was to all grow up to become physicians.

"I wanted to be a dermatologist, my older brother a neurosurgeon, my sister a pediatrician and my younger brother an ophthalmologist," McFarland says.

Dreams by nature are often deemed as such due to the fact they are extremely hard to reach. But, McFarland says he had many sources of encouragement while he grew up. McFarland's father — a family physician himself — wanted his kids to grow up to be successful.

"My dad always said he wanted his kids to have a better life than he had," McFarland says.

"He wanted to use the farm for two reasons. Number one to get away from people. And number two, to make sure that his kids were grounded and knew what hard work looked like."

A strong work ethic is what McFarland knew while growing up on an Angus and Beefmaster cattle operation. It was a natural segue for McFarland and his siblings to become involved in the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA).

Now an administrative fellow at Johns Hopkins Medicine, Daniel has harnessed the skills fostered by the NJAA and supported by the Angus Foundation to be successful in his respective field and recognized as a success story of the Foundation.

Work ethic

Smiling fondly of his younger, extremely gregarious self, McFarland thinks back to growing up on his family's

farm and how those days helped mold him.

"We had to get up at 5 a.m., similarly to everyone else that typically grew up on a farm," he says. "So, at a young age you had to assume a certain work ethic that most didn't have."

That work ethic was developed on the farm and encouraged throughout McFarland's NJAA career.

"Something that my parents always instilled in me, and it's actually a biblical reference, is if you stay consistently true to the small things, then the big things — whenever they are handed to you — you know how to deal with them and you also know how to shine in those types of moments."

As a kid coming from Louisiana who didn't know anyone in the Business Breed, McFarland says he and his siblings were welcomed to the Angus family with open arms. After attending his first National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) in Kansas City in 2004, he knew that the NJAA was a program that he wanted to stay a part of.

"The National Junior Angus Association does a really good job of showing people's strengths and weaknesses and allows them to either capitalize on their strengths or work on their weaknesses," he says.

McFarland still uses skills garnered from the public speaking contests.

"The friendships, and also the leadership growth attributes that you achieve while being a part of the association are two components that I reflect on," he says.

Looking back, he laughs at the little boy who was so nervous to attend his first NJAS. Now, McFarland can't imagine his life without his Angus family. From annually attending Leaders Engaged in Angus Development (LEAD) Conferences to being elected to serve on the National Junior Angus Association Board of Directors

"Something that my parents always instilled in me, and it's actually a biblical reference, is if you stay consistently true to the small things, then the big things — whenever they are handed to you — you know how to deal with them and you also know how to shine in those types of moments."

— Daniel McFarland

Continued on page 100



While working as an administrative fellow at Johns Hopkins Medicine, McFarland serves as an advocate for the beef industry daily.

(NJAB) in 2012, being involved in the NJAA afforded McFarland numerous experiences and opportunities.

Support

McFarland wasn't short of accolades and achievements throughout his collegiate experience, either. While obtaining his bachelor's degree in animal science at the University of Arkansas, he was elected as the student body president of his graduating class and remained involved in the NJAA.

Being a part of the Angus family was more than just physical support for McFarland. On his class president campaign trail it was those he knew from showing cattle who were the first to volunteer to provide encouragement and financial support.

"When I look back on my experiences so far in life I think the Angus Foundation had a significant impact not only on my personal growth, but also my professional growth," McFarland says.

From participating in Angus Foundation-supported events to receiving scholarships to offset tuition, McFarland attributes many of his opportunities to the help from his Angus family.

Today

Though he may not work directly within agriculture, McFarland still plays a vital role in the industry. Today, he serves as an advocate for beef while he works in urban Baltimore as an administrative fellow at Johns Hopkins Medicine.

"I think that even though I'm not on the farm every day anymore and I don't work in an ag field; I think that every day I am an advocate," McFarland says.

Looking at his suit and tie, it may be hard to imagine that he prefers to spend his days off in the barn or at a cattle show. McFarland says in his role he has the opportunity to work with a diverse array of people and so whenever he has the chance, he talks about his background on the farm.

The Angus industry is a small world and McFarland says he is typically only one person removed from knowing someone who grew up showing with him.

"Throughout my life I've seen random occurrences



Growing up in Keithville, La., McFarland spent every summer attending the National Junior Angus Show alongside his parents and siblings.

where Angus has popped up," he says. "What other field could you say that has so much familiarity across so many areas of life? My experiences in the Angus industry helped me figure out what I really wanted to do in life," he says.

From junior member, to green jacket, and now to Johns Hopkins, McFarland's character and work ethic allows him to serve as an example for junior Angus members across the country. **AJ**