

*Everyone loves a true professional.
That was never more evident than during this year's Olympics.
Watching those with courage and skill execute their
talents with precision was enjoyable, because they enjoy it,
Veryl Jones can't quite be called the Mary Lou Retton of our business,
but in his field, he is the same type of professional.
You can match him against the gold medalist in the Olympics-
that's how you can class him. He retires this
month after many years on the road as a publication fieldman,
mngman and ad salesman. The last two of those years were spent as
advertising manager of the Angus Journal.
We'll miss you, Veryl!*

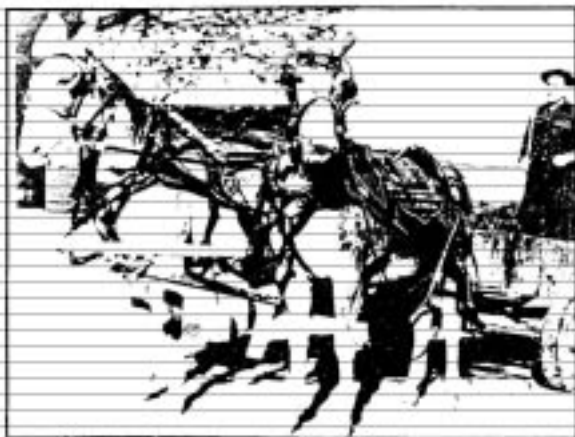
If They Gave GOLD MEDALS... Veryl Jones Would Have One



by Pat Wiley
Advertising Coordinator

From his early days on the farm near Calhoun, Mo., raising Herefords and breaking mules, Veryl Jones gained experience and a love for the livestock business which led him to his life's occupation.

Veryl's auction experience and a longing for that fast pace began in his high school days when he skipped school to travel with his father who would purchase mules to break, work and resell during the depression. Veryl's father gave each of his sons—Floyd, Veryl and Billy—authority and freedom enough to make their own mistakes. As Veryl puts it, "If you didn't learn something in the horse and mule business, you'd be out of it pretty quickly. If we were cheated, we figured that was a good lesson and we'd know better next time."



Some of Veryl's early experiences with livestock began by driving mules for his father.

Since Veryl was raised in livestock circles, perhaps he had a love for the business "in his blood." However, the ability to be good at his work was most definitely influenced by Fos Palmer, manager at the Corn Belt Farm Dailies. This was Veryl's first experience with a publication after graduation from the University of Missouri-Columbia and then almost four years in the army during World War II. While undoubtedly, as Lyle Haring states, "Fos had a knack for picking the good ones," he was also a great manager and teacher. Fos had a great respect for people and a great concern for the business.

Liking people and the business

The qualifications for and demands on a publication fieldman require a rather unique individual. The fieldman must be willing to give time and energy to his clients in merchandising and marketing their cattle seven days a week, if necessary. It's often a grueling schedule, with 43 sales reported in Iowa (Veryl's Journal territory) during the 1983 fiscal year and special requests by breeders in other territories for Veryl's presence at ringside.

Special dedication is required to put forth the type of effort necessary for a great sale. A good ringman does more than take a bid now and then—he creates excitement through his energy at a sale. It is the extra effort which encourages buyers at a sale to bid, and hopefully makes the animals more valuable in the end.

"You've got to like people, you've got to love the livestock business. You've got to love working the ring, or you can't be a good ringman."



Veryl's early experiences as a boy influenced his life's occupation, but his first publication experience came after serving four years in the army during World War II.



The sale scene was often active, especially when (as pictured above) Roy Johnston, auctioneer, teamed up with Veryl Jones, ringman.

Why did Veryl stay with such a job? He replies, "You've got to like people, you've got to love the livestock business. You've got to love working the ring, or you can't be a good ringman."

Because of Veryl's unique ability as a ringman, advertising sales came easily. Advertisers not only needed advertising, but they also wanted a good ringman. As auctioneer Ray Sims says, "They (breeders) know that he is good and he has been good. He's in command because of his ability. I'll tell you what makes a good ringman—it's the ability to see the whole picture. Veryl can walk up on the scene and see it."

"It all comes down to pure old good judgement and sense," Roy Johnston says. He continues, "If you don't know the value of what you are selling, you can't sell it. It all goes down to being fair, too. It's like going to the store to buy some clothes, you want to get what you're paying for. Veryl is a good judge of the value of livestock."

But if you ask Veryl what makes him good in the ring, he is quick to say anyone can be a good ringman, provided one wants to be. His ingredients for a good ringman? "First thing, you can't be lazy. Second, you've got to like it.

Veryl Jones is the best there is when it comes to working the ring at an auction sale. Time and time again, Veryl's contributions have enhanced the value of Angus cattle. Just one example of the difference Veryl Jones could make at ringside was displayed at the 1975 National Western Angus Bull Sale. BRV Cartier 612 was the first bull in the ring. The bids were slow to come and it appeared this grand champion might well take the gavel at \$13,000, but the rest of the story written that day recorded a sale price of \$31,000. The \$18,000 difference came through Veryl's belief in the value of the bull and his ability to pass that conviction and enthusiasm along to the bidders. As Veryl teamed with the late Ham James, those present were able to witness the skill of two masters at work.

—Greg Garwood

You should know something about the value of the livestock. Then you've got to work. You pride yourself on attending the sale—on being there. You sell advertising based on that. We made it a habit to be at that sale about two hours ahead of time."

These ingredients sound easy, but they're not. Success requires much

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study and work—hard work. And Veryl has always been willing to put forth the effort.

Craig and Al Conover have had Veryl work the ring for sales on their farm, as well as working with him at other sales. They testify, "Early on we found Veryl Jones to be a man who gave 100 percent on sale day to assist the breeder and the sales force conducting the sale, if you treated him fairly and honestly. Many a day he could make a world of difference."

Veryl lends integrity to the business through his belief in what is right and his strict adherence to the truth. Early instructions in this way of life are noticeable as he tells of lessons from the two men who influenced his life most: his father and Fos Palmer.

Veryl remembers, "My Dad taught me as a boy that he would rather a person stick a gun in his back and rob him than to be lied to. You know what the man with the gun in your back is going to do, you don't know what the man that lies to you is going to do. You don't know where he stands.

"I talked with Fos one time," he adds, "and asked what to do on a certain advertising deal. I said, 'How do you make up your mind what's right and what's not?' Fos responded, 'Veryl, let me tell you something, go down the middle of the road and don't let them pull you to the left and don't let them pull you to the right. I said go down the middle of the road and do what you think is right and never look back. You have satisfied yourself and if you don't lie to anybody, you don't have to worry about what the truth is.'

Attitude important

Veryl's ability has been surpassed only by his attitude. As a professional in his work, he has taken the criticism and the praise, both with an understanding smile. Veryl has been a listener for his coworkers and his customers.

Dale Runnion comments, "Veryl was always welcome on the farm for a look around . . . a cup of coffee at the kitchen table . . . a dialogue about the business of breeding and merchandising purebred Angus. Regardless of where he was in the United States, his loyalty to 'his breeders' showed."



In a tribute to Veryl at the Marketeers Club ceremony at the 1984 National Western Stock Show in Denver, Ray Sims concluded, "Veryl's one you can hook on the right, or hook on the left and he will keep his tugs tight on either one." This old term refers to a good team of horses working together to the completion of a task. It seems a very fitting comment for Veryl.

Veryl has always been a team player. In the words of Claude Willett, "Veryl is a good judge of livestock and of people. He has an outgoing personality, makes friends really quickly and has a jolly manner about him. Those abilities are very important in a fieldman."

Craig Conover adds his own experience. "Veryl was a big help to me in those early years on the road. I was the new man on the staff and he did not overlook me or go around me, but rather was helpful and encouraged people to give me a chance. I found Veryl to be a man who believed in honest hard work and fairness and he was rewarded for it—and he was willing to reward others who did the same. Al and I have both enjoyed success in the auction and sale management business and readily admit that men like Veryl Jones allowed this to happen. He was willing to work with us, he was willing to encourage people to give us a chance and let us prove ourselves."

It seems obvious Veryl gained the respect of those he traveled with, as well as those for whom he worked. Incidentally, many of Veryl's co-workers have become his closest friends. After sharing so much of their past together, they have developed a close fraternity.

This rapport is not hard to understand considering that many breed and publication fieldmen traveled together often. Stories of such times are numerous and entertaining. Jim Orton recalls, "Because Veryl and I had the same kind of suitcase and both of us had gone on a diet in the late '50s, Ray Sims nicknamed us the Metracal Twins. This was a name that stuck with us for several years." Ray Sims seems to recall a bit more about those Metracal Twin days, "Veryl and Jim Orton had so much fun and they worked the sales so well together. They traveled everywhere together and sold those sales in Missouri, Kansas and part of Oklahoma . . . when they started down that road, there just wasn't any end to having fun. But if it weren't for the fun they had, they never could have made it."

Making it would never have been possible without an understanding wife, either. Veryl's wife Ruby—along with their sons, Jay and Mike—has encouraged Veryl and established a stable home, helping to make Veryl's 32 years as a ringman, advertising salesman and advertising manager a career success.

Veryl and Ruby currently live in Clinton, Mo., not far from Calhoun where the story began. After his retirement from the Angus Journal in December, Veryl will be joining his son Mike and daughter-in-law Cheryl in running their two farms and commercial cattle operation in the Clinton area. **AJ**

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