

A Man for All Ages

Bill Powell has touched the lives of many generations of Angus breeders during his tenure with the Association.

by Corinne Blender

“Are you sure that was a bid?” the auctioneer questioned Bill Powell. A young man not more than 5 years old sat by his grandfather, and he had Bill’s attention. The young boy was determined to buy the Angus heifer in the ring to add to his grandfather’s herd.

“You betcha,” Bill called back.

Bill remembers going on up the price ladder with that young boy, and he had the last call in for the boy when the auctioneer offered one last rap of his gavel.

“That young man is still in the cattle business,” Bill says. “Unfortunately his grandfather has passed away, but I’d see him at different auctions, and he often

laughed about the first time his grandson bought an animal for him.”

That memory of the young boy at an auction tells a lot about Bill Powell’s 23-year career as a regional manager for the American Angus Association. While hassles at the airport and driving mile after mile were the hardest aspects of the job, working with the youth and his passion for an exciting auction were the most fun.

Bill has always had a soft spot for youth and Angus alike. There are many families of which Bill has been a part of in one sense or another.

“We have always enjoyed him — not only as an individual working with the Association, but as a friend as well,” says Gordon Shive, explaining that Bill knew his father and helped both Shive and his daughters with their projects. Today Shive’s granddaughter, the fourth generation, has entered the Angus arena.

Bill has been there for all the youth involved in Angus, Shive says. “He was always there to help the kids — not necessarily to do their jobs, but to advise them on what they should be doing, what’s already completed and giving them compliments on what they’ve done up until that point.”

“I’ve known him since I was a junior member,” says Chuck Grove, regional manager for Kentucky, Ohio and Tennessee. “Even when I was a junior, he would always go out of his way to speak to, encourage and visit with the youth. Youth are naturally drawn to Bill Powell. He takes the time to make sure that they

feel important.”

The Eastern Regional show has been one of Bill’s favorite activities. He says that events involving both parents and youth, such as the Eastern Regional, are a part of the reason Angus youth grow up to be strong leaders.

“The great fellowship you make in this breed, with all the good people, is so important. I see the parents do well, and then the kids come along and do well, and then their kids are starting to show. It’s a real family outing,” Bill says, adding that family values are abundant in the Angus industry. “A lot of times when a family goes to a show, they all jump in the pickup, and they spend a lot of hours together traveling. They build a lot of family ties. The family bond is really strong in the Angus industry.”

Voice of experience

Growing up in the “Angus family” has built other lifelong relationships for Bill. Association employees have enjoyed his dedication to the people as well as his professionalism and ability to work as a part of a team.

Terry Cotton, general manager for the *Angus Journal*, says Bill’s knowledge and experience were vital to the Association and to the *Angus Journal* when representatives for each were combined into the single position of regional manager serving both entities.

More than 20 years of service allowed Bill to see many changes within the Association as the breed adapted to new technologies and member needs. Growth of artificial insemination (AI) and the use of embryo transfer



PHOTO BY SHELLA STANNARD

► Bill Powell is retiring in March 2003 after having served the American Angus Association for 23 years. He says calling at auctions such as the National Western Angus Bull Sale in Denver, Colo., has been one of his favorite aspects of the job.

► Powell's co-workers appreciate his dedication to his job. They say he has always been professional and is someone to count on when needed.



PHOTO BY CORINNE BLENDER

(ET) have been two key advancements during his tenure. And data collected on cattle is now entered through computers as the industry becomes more high-tech.

"Many of the ways we serve the membership are ideas that Bill suggested because of the years of experience that he brought to the American Angus Association," Cotton says. "They were adjustments that were right for the times as new programs and the breeding of Angus cattle changed. His advice was always on target, and his knowledge of what an individual animal was worth made for a complete Association staff member."

Bill is a mentor to many in the Angus business, Cotton adds, pointing out that he has worked in many capacities of the breed, including owning his own herd, working as a state association secretary and managing Angus ranches.

"He knows how to handle many of the daily duties that we are confronted with every day in this business. Bill is considered one of the very best marketers of Angus cattle by his peers," Cotton says. "Those of us who worked with him shall be forever grateful that he taught us how to do the job right."

"We have all enjoyed having Bill as our regional manager in the Northeast, and he's become an Angus icon to everyone involved in the beef industry in that region," says John Crouch, executive vice president of the American Angus Association. "However, the members in his territory are sure to miss him the most, as they've come to depend on Bill for service and

guidance they need to be successful in the registered Angus business."


Shive says he hopes to see Bill's smiling face at future Angus shows and events. Bill says he figures he'll make it to an event or two. Once you're a part of the Angus community, it's hard to just cut it out of a person's life.

Time to tend the cows

Speaking of work to be done, Bill says there are many chores on his farm that he has been putting off that may get done now that he'll have time.

"I've been very fortunate. I have a wife who is really good with the cattle and equipment and things of that nature," says Bill, adding that he couldn't have done it without her. "Without my wife, Gail, chances are we would probably have about 10 cows. I have been very fortunate that she was interested in cattle and farming and is capable of doing a lot of the things while I have been away. She has sort of been the glue that has held things together while I was on the road."

Gail and Bill look forward to taking care of their 60 Angus cows and to spending time together on their Thurmont, Md., farm, Arrowhead Farms, a dream that has taken a backseat to helping others until now.

"I thought when I got up in years I could manage my own place and own my own cattle. As time went on I stayed with the publications," Bill says. "I found out they may be more lucrative than doing the farmwork and selling cattle. So, I didn't retire to the farm as soon as I thought I would." 

A true marketer

Bill Powell, a regional manager for the American Angus Association was honored with the 2003 Livestock Marketeer of the Year Award at the National Western Stock Show (NWSS) in Denver, Colo., Jan. 18. This award is given annually by fellow publication representatives, auctioneers, sale managers and breed association representatives to recognize excellence in the livestock marketing profession.

"He is very deserving of the Marketeer Award as he has devoted his entire professional career to marketing pedigreed and commercial livestock, the true definition of this award," says Stanley Stout, an auctioneer who remembers calling on Powell when he worked at REA Ranch in Texas. "He would certainly qualify as well as anybody else who has ever been inducted."

Powell has dedicated more than three decades of his life to marketing livestock, 23 years of which he spent with the American Angus Association. He is retiring in March 2003 after serving as regional manager for the East Coast. His co-workers say he fulfilled every part of his appointed position, but marketing livestock was near and dear to his heart.

"He has always stressed the importance of marketing to the breeders that he represents, and to other Angus breeders in the industry that there are lots of folks out there who can feed cattle, breed them and raise them, but they don't have the capability or the knowledge to get the product marketed," says Chuck Grove, regional manager for Kentucky, Ohio and Tennessee.

Powell grew up on Arrowhead Farms, the family Angus operation near Thurmont, Md. When he was a youth, he was active in junior Angus activities, 4-H and FFA, where he was a skilled public speaker and held several offices and leadership positions. After attending the University of Maryland, he served as the secretary/fieldman for the Virginia Angus Association. From there he accepted a position as manager of REA Ranch in Texas, and he later served as a field representative for the *Drovers Journal* and the *Livestock Breeders Journal*. In 1980 he accepted a position with the American Angus Association and the *Angus Journal*.

Stout "roasted" Powell at the award ceremony. He told many stories about Powell and says, "Powell always had a good sense of humor and a heart bigger than a barn."

Says Powell about the award, "The thing about it that's really special to me is so few people from the East ever get recognized. When you look at the list of the people who have received that award, it's a great honor because they are some of the dynamic leaders in our industry."

Stout and Grove agree that Powell's professionalism has made him an icon in the East.

"He is a real professional ad salesman and a very good ringman," Stout says. "He loved working for the breeders to obtain top dollar on their livestock and to work a sale in a professional manner."



PHOTO BY ROD WESSELMAN

► Powell received the Livestock Marketeer of the Year Award at the National Western Stock Show. The award recognizes individuals who have dedicated their lives to marketing livestock. Stanley Stout (left), auctioneer, "roasted" Powell at the award ceremony.