

Members honored for contribution to the breed, milestones, leadership during annual awards breakfast in Indianapolis, Ind.

by **Jena McReil**, digital editor, & **JD Rosman**

The Angus breed's leadership position within the beef industry didn't happen by chance. It was earned by countless breeders and supporters who all paved the way for a stronger future for beef cattle genetics and the American Angus Association.

Each year, the organization recognizes breed leaders and their contributions during the Association's Awards Recognition Breakfast, hosted as part of the Angus Convention.

Four individuals were inducted into the Angus Heritage Foundation: Bill Davis, Montana; Veryl Jones, Missouri, posthumously; Joe Neely, Kentucky; and Charles "Bud" Smith, Kentucky.

Bill Davis. Lifelong stockman Bill Davis was 9 years old when his parents founded Rollin' Rock Angus in Belgrade, Mont. He continues that ranching legacy today, as he and his wife, Jennifer, manage the registered-Angus operation.

Growing up, Davis was active in 4-H and began his own Angus breeding project. He went on to attend Montana State University, where he earned an agricultural business degree and was active on the University's rodeo team. After returning to the ranch, Davis remained active in several industry organizations, serving in a number of leadership roles.

He is a former president of the Montana Beef Performance Association, and has been a member of the Board of Directors for both the Montana Angus Association and the Montana Stockgrowers Association. In 2010, Davis served as president and chairman of the American Angus Association's Board of Directors, providing valuable insight and leadership for the future of the Angus breed.

Through the years, Rollin' Rock Angus has continued to grow and establish trust with loyal customers. The Angus cow, the Angus breed and Angus people have always played, and will continue to play, a major role in Davis's life.

Veryl Jones. Marketing Angus cattle was a true passion for the late Veryl Jones. During the course of his career, he worked for several leading industry publications, including the *Angus Journal*.

In the fall of 1952, Jones accepted a livestock fieldman position with the Corn Belt Farm Dailies and moved his family to Washington, Iowa. Seven years later, he returned to his home state of Missouri to work for the *Kansas City Drovers Telegram*. In 1964, he became a livestock fieldman for the *Angus Journal*, which at the time was published in Webster City, Iowa.

He stayed with the *Angus Journal* through the transition to Saint Joseph, Mo., as an

entity of the American Angus Association, and later served as its advertising manager. Jones loved the Angus breed and Angus people. He treated people fairly and honestly, and enjoyed the thrill of working the ring on sale day.

Jones retired from the *Angus Journal* in 1984 and returned to the family farm to continue to raise Angus cattle with his son, Michael, who manages a commercial Angus herd near Clinton, Mo.

Joe Neely. Born and raised just north of the Tennessee border, Joe Neely is the sixth generation to make a living on his family's farm near Franklin, Ky. He grew up showing Angus steers and later purchased an Angus cow and heifer calf with his younger brother, Ben, forming the partnership of Charles R. Neely and Sons.

In 1951, Neely became a member of the American Angus Association and continued to show cattle at the local, state and national levels under the name Meadowbrook — the farm's current name. Angus cattle and farming have provided Neely's sole livelihood for his entire life.

Neely served as president of the Kentucky Angus Association in 1973-1974 and was instrumental in founding the North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE). He later served on the Board of

Angus Heritage Foundation Award

The Angus Heritage Foundation recognizes individuals who have made a significant contribution to the advancement of the Angus breed and Association programs.



► **Bill Davis**, Belgrade, Mont., was inducted into the Angus Heritage Foundation. Pictured are (from left) Bill Davis, recipient; Jera Pipkin, 2016 Miss American Angus; and Allen Moczygemba, American Angus Association CEO.



► **Joe Neely**, Franklin, Ky., was inducted into the Angus Heritage Foundation. Pictured are (from left) Joe Neely, recipient; Pipkin; and Moczygemba.



► **Charles "Bud" Smith**, Russell Springs, Ky., was inducted into the Angus Heritage Foundation. Pictured are (from left) Bud Smith, recipient; Pipkin; and Moczygemba.

PHOTOS BY LEANN SCHLEICHER, ANGUS MEDIA

Directors of the American Angus Association from 1980 to 1986 and served as president in 1987.

Neely and his wife, Deanna, have three children, Dave, Polly and John, all of whom were active in the National Junior Angus Association. The Angus breed has been a large part of their lives. Today the legacy continues with Neely's son, Dave, who maintains a small herd of Angus cattle.

Charles "Bud" Smith. With roots planted deep in the heart of Kentucky, Charles "Bud" Smith grew up loving the land. He spent his days working with his father, uncle and grandfather on the family farm and ranch, Smithland Angus Farm. After purchasing their first registered Angus cattle in 1940, the legacy only grew from there.

The operation has grown to more than 250 registered Angus cows. Smithland Angus Farm leads a legacy deeply rooted in faith, family and the land that has offered Smith and his family so much. He believes raising cattle is not just a way to make a living, but also a rewarding way to raise a family.

As a member of the American Angus Association since 1957, Smith served as a director from 1992 to 1998 and was vice president in 1999 and president in 2000. He also served three years as a director on the Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) Board, along with remaining active within the Russell County Cattlemen's Association.

In these roles, he has worked to engage 4-H and FFA youth through various programs to increase involvement in the cattle industry.

Bud and his wife, Pam, have served as advisors for the Kentucky Junior Angus Association for more than 20 years. They received the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) Advisor of the Year award in 1999.

A century in the making

Civil war veteran James Alexander Criswell joined the American Aberdeen-Angus Breeders' Association in 1916 under the name J.A. Criswell & Sons. The ornate membership document is still preserved as part of the family's history today. James Alexander was the second generation to raise cattle on the family farm in central Missouri, and the first with registered Angus.

Today, when Matt Thomas, the sixth generation, checks cattle, he walks the same ground as his ancestors before him. He and

Century Award

The Century Award recognizes herds and their owners and families who have been in continuous production of registered Angus cattle for 100 years or more.



► **Thomas-Criswell Angus, New Bloomfield, Mo.,** received the Century Award. Pictured are (from left) Matt Thomas, recipient; Pipkin; and Moczygemba.

his wife, Amy, live on the original home site that was established in 1829. Now known as Thomas-Criswell Angus, the family is celebrating 100 years of Angus cattle grazing their hills and pastures.

The American Angus Association was proud to recognize Thomas-Criswell Angus with the Century Award during its Awards Recognition Breakfast. Matt Thomas accepted the honor on his family's behalf.

"It's an honor to carry on what my grandpa, my Pap, used to do," Matt Thomas says. "Not only him, but also his granddads before him. It's a way to honor what we came from, and hopefully it is going to be here a long time."

In the farm's early years, the Sons in J.A.



► **Sponsor Scott Holt (left) of AllFlex and GINETTE Gottswiller (right),** director of commercial programs for the American Angus Association, announced **Dan Johnson, Dillon, Mont.,** as the Future Angus Stockmen Scholarship winner.

Criswell & Sons grew the land to 480 acres and continued registering cattle under that same membership their entire lives. The following generation, Russell Criswell, maintained the herd until 2005, fostering a lifelong love of Angus cattle in his daughter, Evelyn. She and her husband, Keith Thomas, currently live on the farm, and their son, Matt, manages the herd.

The last century has brought much change, challenges and opportunity to agriculture. At Thomas-Criswell Angus, they incorporate genomic technology and artificial insemination (AI) to bring out the best in their genetics. Home to about 20 mother cows, Matt knows their pedigrees and performance inside out.

Like those who've gone before them, the family is committed to caring for the cattle and preserving the land for the next generation. Read more in "Living History," beginning on page 106.

Future Angus Stockmen scholarship awarded

Commercial cattlemen play a central role within the beef business, as they work to produce high-quality cattle to perform down the production chain.

To help encourage the next generation of commercial cattle producers, the American Angus Association launched the Future Angus Stockmen program, which awards a \$1,000 scholarship annually thanks to support from Allflex and Destron Fearing.

This year's recipient, Dan Johnson of Dillon, Mont., was announced during the Awards Recognition Breakfast.

Johnson is a junior at Kansas State University studying agribusiness. With aspirations to manage his own commercial Angus cattle operation, he also plans to pursue a career in livestock marketing. Johnson found his love for the cattle industry when his father presented his first commercial Angus heifer as a gift.

Over the years, he has worked to develop his own herd, as well as helping with all aspects of the family's cattle operation. His herd has grown to 40 head, and earned him recognition as the state champion in Montana FFA Beef Proficiency and the State Star Farmer.

"One of the most important lessons I have learned is that hard work really does pay off," Johnson says. "When my father gave me my

CONTINUED ON PAGE 98

first commercial Angus female, I was given the responsibility to make my own herd.”

Future Angus Stockmen is designed to help young cattlemen with strong work ethics, like Johnson, get a leg up on understanding available resources to help their operations, says American Angus Association Commercial Programs Director Ginette Gottswiller.

Participants can enroll each year and take advantage of Association programs such as the Beef Records Service (BRS), MaternalPlus®, AngusSource® or AngusSource Genetic at a reduced cost. Future Angus Stockmen also receive incentives for genomic testing, using DNA technology such as GeneMax® Focus™ or GeneMax Advantage™.

“These young producers are the future of the beef industry,” Gottswiller says. “Creating opportunity for our young ranchers, from both the commercial and seedstock levels, will create continued breed success for every producer.”

Miss American Angus: A Crowning Achievement

Miss American Angus, with her sparkling tiara and bold red jacket, represents a promise for the future of the Angus breed. The newly crowned 2017 Miss American Angus, Keegan Cassady, Bloomington, Ill., impressed the judges with her genuine passion for the business breed and love of its people.

“I absolutely love the warmth of the Angus breeders,” Cassady says. “It’s a community you can’t find anywhere else. They’re so passionate about their breed, and it’s great to come together at events like the Angus Convention to get to know one another.”

The Miss American Angus competition, hosted by the American Angus Auxiliary, took place during the 2016 Angus Convention. The crowning ceremony was a highly anticipated event during the Awards Recognition Breakfast.

A tradition nearly 50 years in the making, five outstanding young ladies compete each year for an opportunity to serve the Angus breed as a spokesperson across the country. The program provides one Angus junior the opportunity to serve the

Miss American Angus

Five college youth compete each year for the honor of being Miss American Angus. The competition, sponsored by the American Angus Auxiliary, includes a written quiz, an interview and public speaking before a panel of three judges.



► **Keegan Cassady**, Bloomington, Ill., was crowned the 2017 Miss American Angus. The daughter of Jerry Cassady and Erica Johnson will represent the Angus breed at numerous beef industry events during her reign. Keegan is the 49th Miss American Angus, and will travel the country as an ambassador for the breed.

breed and assist with shows, educational events and field days to educate others about the beef industry and benefits of Angus genetics.

“Miss American Angus is more than a crown and sash; she’s someone who is knowledgeable about the Angus breed and is a strong role model for younger members,” Cassady says. “I’m looking forward to serving as that representative for the Angus breed in the coming year, and being an advocate for our industry.”

A freshman at Oklahoma State University, Cassady studies animal science and agricultural communications. She is the

daughter of Jerry Cassady and Erica Johnson. Being involved with the Angus breed and the American Angus Association “just runs in our blood,” Cassady says of her family and life spent raising cattle.

An active member of the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA), Cassady attributes the youth organization for helping her develop vital leadership skills for the future. She’s participated in nearly every contest offered at the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) and attended several Leaders Engaged in Angus Development (LEAD) conferences.

“I wouldn’t be where I am today without everything that the National Junior Angus Association has offered to me,” Cassady says. “Leadership is about being a team player and working together to make your organization better as a whole. I’ve made the best of friends throughout this experience.”

Five finalists were chosen for the Miss American Angus Contest through the Auxiliary’s scholarship application process.

While in Indianapolis, Ind., for the Angus Convention, the young women completed a written test, delivered a speech and interviewed with the panel of three judges. Bruce Everhart, Waldron, Ind.; Betsie Ebert Michael, Fishersville, Va.; and Tonya Phillips, Maysville, Ky., served as judges for this year’s event.

It’s a competitive process, and one that hundreds of young NJAA members have aspired to through the years.

When she was 12 years old, Cassady remembers attending the NJAS and seeing Miss American Angus for the first time: “She had such presence in the ring, and I was in awe of her confidence and poise. Ever since that moment, I’ve hoped to be that role model for younger members.”

Additional finalists during this year’s competition included Sara Hatlewick, Jamestown, N.D.; Hayley DeHaan, McMinnville, Ore.; Reba Colin, Butler, Mo.; and Hannah Steph, Tatum, Texas.

Cassady succeeds 2016 Miss American Angus Jera Pipkin, Republic, Mo. To learn more about the Miss American Angus program, visit www.angusauxiliary.com. To read the speech Cassady delivered during the competition in Indianapolis, turn to page 102.



► Competing this year for the title of Miss American Angus are (from left) **Keegan Cassady**; **Reba Colin**, Butler, Mo.; **Hayley DeHaan**, McMinnville, Ore.; **Sara Hatlewick**, Jamestown, N.D.; and **Hannah Steph**, Tatum, Texas. The five competed via a written quiz, an interview and a prepared speech before a panel of three judges.

ROV winners named

The American Angus Association's Roll of Victory (ROV) Show Program recognizes the individual show-winning animals and the sires and dams of major award winners on an annual, current-year basis.

Points are awarded according to placings at designated shows and are accumulated throughout the course of the show year, which for the 2015-2016 show year ended May 31, 2016. Points are not accumulated from year to year.

An animal's highest two point earnings in super-point shows and highest two point earnings in recognized shows were totaled to establish the Show Bull and Show Heifer of the Year, as well as division champions. If an animal is shown at more than two super-point shows, the points from the third and fourth super-point shows can be given at regular-point level.

Awards for the champion show heifer, show bull and breeder of the year were

presented at the 2016 Angus Convention, while other award winners were recognized at the North American International Livestock Exhibition in Louisville, Ky., and in the September 2016 *Angus Journal* (see page 288).


Express Angus Ranches, Yukon, Okla., and Ryan Callahan, Edmond, Okla., were recognized for exhibiting the ROV Show Bull of the Year, C&C Blue Ribbon 4010. The January 2014 son of EXAR Blue Chip 1877B and an EXAR Titlelist T011 dam earned 85 points. On hand to accept the award were Ryan Callahan and Bob Funk and Jarold Callahan, both of Express Angus Ranches.

David Smith, Boulder, Colo., was recognized for exhibiting ROV Show Heifer of the Year, Champion Hill Georgina 8547. She's a November 2013 daughter of SAV Angus Valley 1867 and a Leachman Saugahatchee 3000C dam and accumulated 92 points through the show year. Smith accepted the award along with breeders Lynn

and Paul Hill of Champion Hill, Bidwell, Ohio.

Express Angus Ranches was recognized as ROV Breeder of the Year. The ranch racked up 731 points during the show year. Accepting the award at the Awards Breakfast were Bob Funk, Jarold Callahan, Mark Squires, Donnie Robertson and Kevin Hafner, all of Express Angus Ranches.

For more information about the ROV Show Program, including a list of designated shows, visit www.angus.org/Show/ShowRovVictoryProgram.aspx.

For more news from the Angus Convention — including summaries, speaker presentations, photos, videos and much more — visit the convention newsroom at www.angus.media/news/Angus-Convention. 

Editor's Note: A student at Oklahoma State University, JD Rosman was the Angus Media 2016 communications intern and was on assignment during the 2016 Angus Convention.

Elite ROV Winners

The American Angus Association's Roll of Victory Show Program recognizes individual show-winning animals and the sires and dams of major award winners on an annual, current-year basis.



► **Express Angus Ranches, Yukon, Okla.,** and Ryan Callahan, Edmond, Okla., were recognized for owning the ROV Show Bull of the Year, C&C Blue Ribbon 4010. Pictured are (from left) Pipkin; Ryan Callahan; Bob Funk and Jarold Callahan, both of Express Angus Ranches; and Moczygemba.



► **David Smith, Boulder, Colo.,** was recognized for exhibiting the ROV Show Heifer of the Year, Champion Hill Georgina 8547. Pictured are (from left) Pipkin; David Smith, recipient; Lynn and Paul Hill, Champion Hill; and Moczygemba.

► **Right: Express Angus Ranches** was recognized as the ROV Breeder of the Year. Pictured are (from left) Pipkin; Donnie Robertson, Kevin Hafner, Mark Squires, Jarold Callahan and Bob Funk, all of Express Angus Ranches; and Moczygemba.

