

## Miss American Angus Keegan Cassady shares the speech she delivered while competing for her title.

by *Keegan Cassady, Miss American Angus*

Join me in taking a look back to 1873. A gentleman by the name of George Grant had just crossed the Atlantic Ocean with the first four Aberdeen-Angus bulls to Victoria, Kan. Just a short 10 years later, the American Aberdeen-Angus Breeders' Association was formed, and because of him, Angus are now the largest breed of beef cattle in the United States, and we can all enjoy delicious Angus beef. George Grant's courage allowed the Angus breed to rise to where it stands today.

Rising with courage has different meanings depending on who you ask. For some, it could be crossing off one of those bucket-list items you've always wanted to do. For others, it may be walking into that showering with a heifer that you don't really trust and getting the grand champion slap. And there are those people for whom it might be standing up in front of a crowd and knocking out that speech they've been dreading.

We all have our own take on what rising with courage means. Today, I would like to discuss what it means to me.

### Begin with an idea

It starts with an idea. Every organization, event, or movement, started as an idea. Just over a 100 years after George Grant brought over those first Angus bulls, a new idea was formed, Certified Angus Beef. The *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) brand was created by a group of individuals to set quality standards for a superior product. Although it wasn't accepted by all, it has grown into a nationally recognized product sold at restaurants and grocery stores. It was a courageous move, but it has experienced great success.

I have faced this in my own life. When I was in eighth grade, I had the idea to move an hour away from my small hometown to a city of 130,000 people. For those of you who don't know, I did not grow up on a farm. My love and passion for agriculture grew from my family's involvement in crops and livestock.

At this point, I had shown cattle for a few years now, but I had to drive an hour every time I wanted to work with one of my show



► 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.

heifers. I had the idea to move, and luckily, both of my parents were on board. They saw the value in investing in my passion by moving closer to the farm. It all started with that courageous idea, and if it weren't for that, I probably would not be standing before you today.

### Vulnerability

Next, you can't have courage without vulnerability. Now courage and vulnerability may seem like total opposites, but they actually go hand in hand. We see this with George Grant. He left his home in Scotland, crossed an ocean, and settled in a new land. By him stepping out of his comfort zone and taking action, this led to the start of "The Business Breed" in America.

Author Dr. Brene Brown states, "Vulnerability is our most accurate measure of courage." True courage requires some level of vulnerability.

In my own life, I have had to put myself out there to get where I wanted to be. Going back to my personal story, I had to make a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 104



► Each year five young women compete for the title of Miss American Angus. Pictured are (from left) Shally Rogen, retiring American Angus Auxiliary president; Jera Pipkin, 2016 Miss American Angus; Keegan Cassady, 2017 Miss American Angus; Reba Colin; Hayley DeHaan; Sara Hatlewick and Hannah Steph.

choice. Was I going to stay in my hometown, or was I going to take the risk and move to where I could gain the same experiences as someone who did grow up on a farm? I chose to be vulnerable, leave my home and dedicate my time and energy to what I was passionate about. If I hadn't, I wouldn't have developed my dedication to the Angus breed. It took courage to get where I am today, but it also took vulnerability. We must step out of our comfort zone, even when it is scary, in order to be successful.

### Set the temperature

The next characteristic comes from Dr. Tim Elmore. He writes about two different types of people: thermostats and thermometers. Some people change their "temperature" by the situation they're in or who they're around. Others stay who they are no matter what. They set the "temperature." It takes courage to be a thermostat, but the most admirable and successful people stand by their idea and who they are regardless of what others think.

Despite skeptics, the founders of the *Certified Angus Beef* brand stuck with their idea. They saw the value in their specifications and the potential for this product. They didn't change as the temperature did; they set the temperature. I experienced this in my journey. Moving from a small town to a city was a huge adjustment. I was the only person in my class with a livestock background. I know that to some I was considered weird for wanting to spend a lot of time shoveling manure, but I had to stay true to myself, even when it wasn't easy. With the courage to set the temperature regardless of the situation, success is achievable.

### Handling setbacks

There can be no success story without setbacks. Nothing goes perfectly right all the time, but those who persevere are the most successful of all. The first Angus bulls that stepped onto American soil didn't exactly fit in. People were not receptive to these strange-looking, black-hided, polled cattle. But, once breeders saw and tasted the benefits of Angus genetics, they were convinced that they would be a positive addition to America's herd.

George Grant saw the potential in the Angus breed, and he had the courage to invest in it, resulting in polled crossbreeds with more tender, flavorful meat.

I found myself having to persevere in my

## 2017 Miss American Angus contest sponsors

**Diamond Sponsorship — \$1,000 or greater**

- ▶ American Angus Association

**Emerald Sponsorship — \$300-\$999**

- ▶ All-American Angus Breeders' Futurity Committee
- ▶ American Angus Hall of Fame, Tom Burke, Missouri
- ▶ Atlantic National Show Committee
- ▶ Cherry Knoll, Margaret and Bob Duprey, Pennsylvania
- ▶ Details by Design, Diane Johnson, Texas
- ▶ Paul and Lynn Hill, Ohio
- ▶ Jim Baldrige's Secret Seasoning, Becky Tiedeman, Nebraska
- ▶ McCurry Angus, Cecil and Sandra McCurry, Kansas
- ▶ Stan and Maggie Tennant, John and Emily Barnes, North Carolina

**Ruby Sponsorship — \$200-\$299**

- ▶ Boyd Beef Cattle, Charlie and Paula Boyd, Kentucky
- ▶ Futurama Farms, the Steve Trospen Family, Missouri
- ▶ Harward Sisters, North Carolina
- ▶ McCurry Angus Ranch, the Andy and Mary McCurry Family, Kansas
- ▶ Nigro's Western Store, Kansas
- ▶ Olson Land & Cattle, Steve and Ginger Olson, Texas
- ▶ Seldom Rest Farms, The Lois Foster Family, Michigan
- ▶ Jill (Sommers) Harker, Janelle (Sommers) Deatsman, Sharon Sommers, Indiana
- ▶ Texas Angus Association, Fort Worth, Texas

**Pearl Sponsorship — \$100-\$199**

- ▶ Harry Bachman, Pennsylvania

- ▶ Madison Butler, 2015 Miss American Angus, Indiana
- ▶ Sunrise Sunset Farm; Tyler, Cortney and Piper Cates; Robert Hill; and Marlene Dukehart, Indiana
- ▶ Connealy Angus, Nebraska
- ▶ Eberlee Farms, Bill and Jane Ebert, North Carolina
- ▶ McCabe Genetics, Randel and Varea McCabe, Kansas
- ▶ Jera Pipkin, 2016 Miss American Angus, Missouri
- ▶ Steve, Cassie, and Hunter Royer Show Cattle, Indiana
- ▶ Wallace Cattle Co., Missouri
- ▶ Yon Family Farms, South Carolina

PHOTO BY LEANN SCHLEICHER, ANGUS MEDIA

▶ Sponsors of Miss American Angus provide numerous supporting gifts the breed ambassador will use throughout the year — from the official sash to a travel allowance, and from the red jacket to the luggage to pack it in.

own story. At times I struggled with moving and starting at a school with over 2,000 students. I had to figure out if the benefits outweighed the drawbacks. I had to stay focused on my goal and what I wanted to do with my life. It was hard to move and start over, but the time spent working and learning on the farm was the most valuable time of all. It took some perseverance, but I wouldn't be who I am today without the

heavy influence of agriculture in my life.

Rising with courage is not easy. It takes an idea, a strong belief in what you are doing, some vulnerability, and perseverance along the way. We have all had to face our fears at some point in our lives, but what will you do the next time an opportunity comes your way? Will you run? Or will you rise?