

Tom Burke Endowment Fund Creates Junior Award Through Angus Foundation

Lifelong Angus breeder inducted into prestigious Saddle & Sirloin Portrait Gallery.

by Sarah Hill, special projects editor

Lifelong Angus sale manager, author, speaker, Angus enthusiast, youth supporter and former American Angus Association Board member Tom Burke of Platte City, Mo., has been selected as the 2017 inductee into the Saddle & Sirloin Portrait Gallery, considered one of the highest honors in the livestock industry.

The Saddle & Sirloin Portrait Gallery was established in 1903 and recognizes one individual annually for their lifetime of exceptional service to the livestock business, both nationally and internationally. The portrait gallery includes 354 portraits of distinguished leaders of the livestock industry and is on permanent display at the Kentucky Fair & Exposition Center in Louisville, Ky.

“Being inducted into the Saddle & Sirloin Portrait Gallery is the highest honor anyone in the livestock industry can achieve,” Burke says. “I couldn’t be more excited. I never dreamed I would be included in this elite group.”

A customary practice for Saddle & Sirloin Portrait Gallery inductees is to designate a 501(c)(3) organization to receive charitable contributions raised in honor of the distinguished honoree. Funds are used to offset project expenses, and Burke’s fundraising effort includes establishing the Tom Burke Angus Youth Endowment Fund through the Angus Foundation.

The endowment will create the Shining Star of the Future Award, a cash award that will be given to one National Junior Angus

Association (NJAA) member age 12 or under. The winner will be selected through an application and interview process and announced at the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS).

“The cash prize can go toward the junior’s Angus cattle endeavors or their future education,” Burke says. “I think every Angus junior needs a little extra encouragement and something to work toward as a warm-up for bigger and better things as they get

older. I wanted to create something to stir youths’ imagination and excitement.”

The Angus Foundation’s support of youth is a mission Burke wholeheartedly supports. He’s attended every NJAS for the last 49 years and the last 50 National Junior Angus Showmanship

Contests, serving as emcee for the very first contest in 1967.

“The future of rural America and agriculture is bright, but it’s our responsibility to feed a hungry world,” Burke says. “We have a lot resting on our shoulders to be efficient enough to feed the world. In 2016, the Angus breed registered 334,000 head of cattle — more than all other beef breeds combined, so we have a lot going for us.”

Contributions can be made to the Tom Burke Angus Youth Endowment Fund through the Angus Foundation.

Growing up Angus

Burke grew up on an Angus farm near Blooming Prairie, Minn., where he showed Angus cattle as a junior, participating in both 4-H and FFA. As a teen, Burke served as both Minnesota State 4-H Club president and as a Minnesota State FFA officer, also serving as a delegate to the 1962 National FFA Convention. He was named Minnesota Star Farmer in 1960. Burke was a charter member



►“The cash prize can go toward the junior’s Angus cattle endeavors or their future education,” says Tom Burke of the fund established in his name through the Angus Foundation.

“One thing I know for sure is that the best Angus cattle and breeders are in North America.”

— Tom Burke

and first president of the Minnesota Junior Angus Association.

“I was an Angus enthusiast from Day 1,” Burke says. “I liked the breed and the cattle. In that era, you showed cattle more than you do today. There wasn’t much of a performance program. It was all built around what happened in the showring.”

Burke served in the U.S. Army from 1965-1967, and then took a position as a fieldman for *Drover’s Journal*, the predecessor to today’s *Drover’s* beef industry magazine. After two years in that role, he joined the American Angus Hall of Fame in Smithville, Mo., in 1967. He has served as sale manager for the Hall of Fame ever since, taking over the business in 1972 after the passing of Hall of Fame founder J.B. McCorkle.

Through the years, Burke has remained a staunch Angus breeder and supporter. Today, he owns a herd of 200 registered Angus cows and 40 registered Suffolk ewes.

Burke’s passion for Angus cattle has been a driving force throughout his life.

“My purpose and pleasure has been to see Angus cattle raised on every continent,” Burke says. “One thing I know for sure is that

CONTINUED ON PAGE 60



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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 58

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Burke has been relentless in his service to the Angus breed. At age 16, he served as a delegate to the Association’s annual meeting. In 1972, he was named Missouri Angus Association Man of the Year, and has served as the All-American Angus Breeders’ Futurity Chairman since that year.

In 2004, Burke received the American Angus Association’s Angus Heritage Award, and his herd was named by the organization as a Historic Herd in 2006. Both the Kansas and Georgia Angus associations have made him an honorary member. From 2013 to 2016, Burke served on the Association’s

Board of Directors, along with the Angus Foundation Board of Directors. In 2017, he served as a U.S. delegate to the World Angus Forum.

Among his accolades:

- ▶ Conducting more than 10,000 Angus sales in 47 states, six Canadian provinces, the Caribbean and Scotland;
- ▶ Speaking to students at 20 U.S. universities and colleges;
- ▶ Co-authoring nine best-selling Angus books that have been distributed in 20 countries;
- ▶ International Live Stock Show Board of Directors, 1974-1975;
- ▶ One of five original lifetime members, Missouri Cattlemen’s Association, 1984;
- ▶ National Suffolk Association Board of Directors, 1988-1996, 2005-2008;
- ▶ Named “America’s Most Traveled

Person” by *USA Today*, 1993-1994;

- ▶ National Western Stock Show Marketer of the Year, 1994; and
- ▶ Inducted into United Suffolk Breeders Association Hall of Fame, 2014.

Burke has a daughter, Carmen; son-in-law, Jake; and three grandchildren: Jett, Miles and Blair. The family lives on Burke’s farm in Platte City, Mo.

World-renowned artist Richard Halstead with Halstead Studios, Evanston, Ill., will paint Burke’s portrait. The portrait will be unveiled Nov. 12 at the North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE) in Louisville, Ky.

For more information contact Milford Jenkins, Angus Foundation president, at 816-383-5100 or mjenkins@angusfoundation.org.

