

# Solid Gold Standards

Fifteen young men and women raise the bar of excellence to claim the gold.

by *Alaina Burt*

*In 2004, 15 members of the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) received Gold Awards through the National Junior Recognition Program (NJRP). Earning a Gold Award symbolizes years of dedication, commitment and achievement.*

*Before earning this highly sought-after award, juniors must first earn Bronze and Silver awards.*

*To be considered for the gold, each award winner must be active in four areas: leadership and association representation; competitions in and*

*out of the showing; registration and compilation of data; and marketing Angus cattle.*

*Junior members can only apply for the Gold Award during their final year of NJAA eligibility (the year they turn 21). As with other competitions, complete, accurate and professional applications are critical. For more information, contact the Junior Activities Department at the American Angus Association at (816) 383-5100, or visit [www.njaa.info](http://www.njaa.info).*

*This year's Gold Award recipients include the following.*



## Jonathan Barnes

Active leadership roles and contest participation are nothing new to Jonathan Barnes, Dolphin, Va. Jonathan has served as vice president, director and president for the Virginia Junior Angus Association (VJAA). In 2001, he was selected as a scholarship winner by the VJAA and the NJAA. From 1998 to 2003, Jonathan attended the NJAA Leaders Engaged in Angus Development (LEAD) Conference.

He has participated in a wide variety of competitions, including the All-American Auxiliary-sponsored *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) Cook-Off contest, as well as the NJAA poster, public speaking, creative writing and graphic design contests. In the NJAA/*Angus Journal* Photography Contest, he earned a third-place honor in 2003.

Contests haven't necessarily led him to where he is today, he says, but they have helped him become a better leader.

"It's made me more comfortable around people — made me a better public speaker," he says. "It's what you need to get in front of a group of people to lead them and show them what to do." The Gold Award has been a standard he's looked forward to ever since



Jonathan Barnes

accomplishing the Bronze and Silver awards. "It's kind of a culmination of my whole career," he explains.

Jonathan is the son of Charles and Lynn Barnes, Dolphin. Following in the footsteps of his father, Jonathan volunteers as a firefighter, which he has been doing since he was 18.

Currently, he takes online classes at the University of Maryland University College, where he is expected to graduate in December 2005 with a degree in fire science. Taking courses via the Internet isn't as easy as e-mailing a few papers to professors, Jonathan says. "If you don't read and you don't keep up, you're still going to be behind. It's just like a regular college classroom setting."

## Katie Cravens

After witnessing the birth of her first Angus heifer calf in 1993, cattle have provided Katie Cravens, Van Buren, Ark., with a sense of belonging and the ability to focus. "The National Junior Angus Association was a major contributing factor to my ability to overcome some shyness and made me achieve my goals," Katie says.

Since then, the



Katie Cravens

family farm has been extremely important to Katie. "The farm, and the care of it, is more than producing an outstanding herd of cattle," she says. "It's raising a family, and it's a way of life."

Her family farm was selected by the Arkansas Angus Association as a state nominee for the *Angus Journal* Land Stewardship Award in 2000. It was recognized as a county and district winner of the Arkansas Farm Family of the Year Program. This award meant a great deal to Katie. "[The farm] came through different generations, and you know that's our land that we maintain," she says.

The Arkansas Junior Angus Association (AJAA) has aided Katie in her leadership skills. She has served as the secretary/treasurer in 2000, and in 2001 was a scholarship winner. At the 1998 National Junior Angus Show (NJAS), Katie exhibited a fourth-place bred-and-owned heifer. She has also participated in the team sales contest in 1999 and 2000, taking first place in 1999. Katie says her favorite contest is team sales because she likes to sell the product and the heifer.

Her team sales experience has played a role in Katie's career. She currently works at Williams/Crawford and Associates Advertising Agency, where she is a junior account executive.

Katie is the daughter of Fred and Shirley Williams, Van Buren.

## Lacey Gorby

Lacey Gorby, Alma, W.Va., has worked hard in and out of the showing. She's been visible at the Atlantic National open and junior shows, West Virginia State Fair, North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE), and the NJAS.

Her experience at the end of a halter helped Lacey make it to the 2002 National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest. Her thoughts on the showmanship contest reflect her drive. "That is something, ever since I can remember, that I wanted to do and achieve. Luckily, with all my hard work, it earned me a spot in the top 15," she says.

Aside from the showing, Lacey has participated in the Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR) program through tracking weaning records. Her

interest in the business side grew with purchasing cattle and registering those animals. This year, Lacey consigned two head to the West Virginia Beef Expo.

She has been active in FFA and will receive her American FFA Degree this fall in Louisville, Ky. In March, she became a certified artificial insemination (AI)

technician.

Lacey plans to graduate in May 2006 from West Virginia University (WVU) with a bachelor's degree in animal and veterinary sciences. From

there she plans to pursue a master's degree at WVU in the area of animal nutrition, with an emphasis on beef cattle.

She is the daughter of James and Paulette Gorby, Alma.

### **Tyler Grissom**

Tyler Grissom, Prague, Okla., is currently attending Oklahoma State University (OSU) in Stillwater with a major in marketing and a minor in finance. He is expected to graduate in December 2005. This summer Tyler is interning at a bank, where he is gaining hands-on experience in all aspects of banking, aiding his minor in finance, as well as giving him an opportunity to practice his marketing skills.

Grissom's leadership skills began by becoming active in the Oklahoma Junior Angus Association (OJAA) where he's grown into wearing the "green jacket" by serving on the NJAA Board of Directors. For Grissom, wearing the green jacket is a family tradition; both his father and his sister have previously served on the NJAA Board.

"If I have any questions about anything, they're there to answer them," Tyler reflects.

Tyler has attended numerous LEAD

conferences and was awarded an OJAA scholarship in 2002.

At the NJAS, Tyler has participated on five Cook-Off teams, and, in 2001, his team

won first place. The Cook-Off is easily his favorite contest because of the large amount of participation that is involved. "You learn to cook, and I like to cook and eat," Tyler says.

In 2003 Tyler represented Oklahoma as an alternate in the national showmanship

competition, which reflects his years of competing at local, state and regional shows.

He is the son of Vic Grissom of Prague and Anita Callahan.

### **Cortney Hill-Dukehart**

Cortney Hill-Dukehart, Sykesville, Md., is no stranger to competition, whether in or out of the showring. She has compiled an extensive list of show results at local, state, regional and national shows. Cortney has exhibited cattle at the NJAS since 1998, and in 2003 she qualified to compete in the national showmanship contest, where she placed third.

It's not unusual to picture Cortney wearing a crown. Her royal duties started in 1998 and 1999 by serving as the Maryland Angus Princess. She progressed to Maryland Angus Queen in 2001, and in 2002 Cortney became Miss American Angus.

About her experience with the junior program, Cortney remarks, "I entered the program with a rudimentary knowledge of what was involved in breeding and raising quality Angus cattle, and I am leaving it with an education that will benefit me for the rest of my life."

That experience stems mainly from her activeness in contests offered by the NJAS. Cortney has placed in the top end of many competitions, including photography, team sales, quiz bowl, graphic design and creative writing. In 2001 she placed first in the cow-calf game, which simulates a breeding program.

Cortney, the daughter of Robert Hill and Marlene Dukehart, Sykesville, currently attends Towson University, near Baltimore, Md. She is pursuing a degree in secondary education and expects to graduate in January 2005. In the future, Cortney looks forward to working with young people just getting involved in the industry.

"My philosophy is that you enter the junior Angus program as a student and leave it as a teacher," she says.

### **Abby Janssen**

Angus has always been a family activity for Abby Janssen. Her parents, Alan and Denise Janssen, Bloomfield, Iowa, met while showing Angus cattle, and they have continued to raise their family in the same scene.

"We used that as our family time," Abby says. It was her family that started Abby toward the gold.

In the showring, Abby has competed at the NJAS numerous times. She attended her first show in 1993 and brought cattle the next year. Since her start, she has only missed showing in Georgia. In 2003, she placed second with her bred-and-owned heifer.

Last year, she earned the right to represent Iowa in the national showmanship contest. In 2000, Abby placed first in the photo contest. In 2001, Abby's Cook-Off team placed first in recipe and overall in the intermediate quick-n-easy division. In 2002, her team placed first in recipe, showmanship and overall in the senior quick-n-easy division. In 2002, Abby's sales team placed second.

Abby says her favorite aspect of the NJAA is the NJAS because of the wide array of activities, which have given her a well-rounded experience. "I've been an actress, I've been a photographer, and I've been a salesman," she says.

This year being her last in the NJAA saddens Abby, she says, because in the past it's always been "next year." She sees her involvement with the Angus Association continuing by helping younger junior members and

getting involved in the Iowa Angus Auxiliary.

Abby currently attends Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa. She is majoring in accounting and minoring in management and art. In the future, she sees herself raising a family in the Angus Association. "I want to carry on that tradition and give back to my children what [the American Angus Association has] given to me."

### **Landi McFarland**

With a hands-on approach to raising cattle, Landi McFarland, Ellston, Iowa, is immersed in the cattle business. "I assist in day-to-day operations, including checking heat, calving, bookkeeping, selecting herd sires, designing advertisements, assisting customers and selling bulls private treaty on the farm," she says.

Landi is currently the Iowa Angus Queen, and she has served as a princess in the past. In 2003, Landi was awarded an Angus Foundation scholarship and placed first in three NJAS contests — extemporaneous speaking, creative writing and quiz bowl. Landi says the contests have broadened her horizons.



Lacey Gorby



Cortney Hill-Dukehart



Tyler Grissom



Abby Janssen

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In 2000, Landi participated in the NJAS carcass contest. "This is where I started to learn about carcass EPDs (expected progeny differences) and ultrasound EPDs," she says. Landi also gains sale experience at Hoover Angus Farm as a herd recordkeeper.

Four of her cows earned Pathfinder status in 2004. "All of those cows were from past show heifers of mine or they were daughters of show heifers," she says.



Landi McFarland

Currently, she attends Southwestern Community College in Creston, Iowa, and will transfer in fall 2004 to Iowa State

University (ISU) in Ames, where she will pursue a degree in agriculture studies and a minor in animal science.

She is the daughter of David and Joy McFarland, Ellston.

### Andrew Miller

Angus cattle have helped Andrew Miller, Luckey, Ohio, develop strong work habits and management skills, which will aid in his pursuit of an engineering degree. Andrew is attending the University of Toledo, and is expecting to graduate from the five-year engineering/co-op program in May 2006. Aside from going to school, he works at Samborn, Stekettee, Otis & Evans (SSOE) Inc. as a co-op engineer.

Andrew is a member of several different Angus associations. In 2002 he received the Ohio Angus Auxiliary scholarship. In the showing, Andrew has competed at all levels, from preview shows to the NJAS, showing both steers and heifers. In 2003, he placed first with a bred-and-owned heifer.



Andrew Miller

Andrew realizes that it isn't always about winning and losing. "Sometimes there aren't any rewards that you actually receive except for the knowledge

gained each year," he explains. He hopes that knowledge gained from competition is worth more to juniors than trophies or ribbons, because that is what it takes to make a better cattleman.

He has also consigned cattle to the Ohio

Beef Expo Angus sale. This year, he sold three head. In addition, his engineering and creative skills have lent Andrew a hand in developing his own portable farm sign for exhibition use.

Andrew has been active in FFA and has been a state FFA judging team contestant. He is the son of Daniel and Catherine Miller, Luckey, Ohio.

### Amanda Penner

Amanda Penner, Mill Creek, Okla., has been active in junior Angus activities at both the state and national levels. An NJAA member since 1990, Amanda began in the OJAA by being elected as a co-reporter in 1993, progressing up the leadership ladder to serve as president in 2001. She has represented her state as a voting delegate, and in 2001 she received an NJAA scholarship.

Amanda has competed with bred-and-owned heifers at several NJAS. In 1999 she had a first-place finish, and in 2001 Amanda exhibited the champion bred-and-owned female. That same year she also competed in the National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest.

Amanda says gaining leadership skills and confidence to go out on her own are two of the biggest things she has gained from the NJAA.

She offers advice for youth interested in the NJAA. "I would get involved at an early age and get to know your peers, younger and older," she says. To Amanda, it's important to make connections and to get involved in junior Angus officer positions.

Amanda currently attends OSU, where she is pursuing a degree in biochemistry and molecular biology with an expected graduation date of May 2005. She became interested in this area because of the genetics behind cattle. This is fitting since, like many juniors, selling heifers, steers and bulls helped her pay for college.

Amanda is the daughter of Harris and Vicki Penner, Mill Creek.

### Paul Pickrell

Paul Pickrell, Augusta, Ky., realized the value of friendship at a very young age while showing cattle. In 1993, Paul made the trip to the NJAS in Kansas, which is a long trek from Kentucky. Even at that age, he grasped the idea of friendship.

"I quickly learned that those things I was never big on were much more fun when they were done with friends," he explains, fondly remembering the chores and hard work associated with showing cattle.

Since that first NJAS, Paul has attended other state, regional and national events, showing his owned and bred-and-owned cattle. He has served the Kentucky Junior Angus Association (KJAA) as a state officer, and, in 2002, his dedication earned him a Kentucky Angus Association (KAA) scholarship.

Paul is excited to end his NJAA career because he is anticipating the next step in life, an outlook the NJAA has taught him. "I am looking forward to aging out of the NJAA," he says. "I have spent many wonderful years in the organization. By the same token, I feel ready to move on and grow in my life."

The son of Gerald and Kathi Pickrell, Augusta, Paul currently is enrolled at Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) and is a music major. He expects to graduate in 2006. Angus cattle will still be a part of Paul's life, but like his father, he says he will most likely have an occupation other than farming.

### Minnie Roberts

Minnie Roberts, daughter of Linda and Curtis Elderton, Sarcoxie, Mo., is a third-generation Angus breeder. "I have been fortunate to see the benefits of a strong breeding program and (to be) challenged to strengthen the integrity of my heritage, not ride on its shirttail," she says. Minnie is working her way through college. She would like to become involved in physical therapy. Minnie credits her mother and grandmother, who have both shown cattle, for getting her involved in the NJAA.

She has been an active member of two Missouri associations, the Missouri Junior Angus Association and the Southwest Missouri Junior Angus Association.

For the latter she has served in several different capacities, including treasurer, vice president and president. She attended the LEAD Conference in 1999 and



Paul Pickrell



Amanda Penner



Minnie Roberts

was an NJAA scholarship winner in 2001.

Minnie has competed well at the NJAS with her owned and bred-and-owned cattle. One of her fondest memories was winning her class at the NJAS in Tulsa, Okla., in 1999. In 2000, Minnie was Missouri's representative for the national showmanship competition.

When she's not involved in showing cattle, Minnie enjoys playing and coaching basketball. By raising cattle, she has become a better basketball player. "Hauling all of those buckets around when I was little did make me more powerful as a post player/forward," Minnie says, adding that working with cattle can really put those defensive moves to the test.

### Jeana Sankey

Representing the fifth generation of Angus breeders, Jeana Sankey, Council Grove, Kan., is continuing her family's 100-year tradition of raising cattle. This means a great deal to the daughter of Chris and Sharee Sankey, also of Council Grove. "I don't think there's any better way to grow up than to grow up in ag, yet to grow up in the Angus industry," Sankey says. She credits her parents for the support and encouragement she has gained and says they have been an inspiration to her.



Jeana Sankey

This fall, Jeana will begin school at OSU where she will be a junior and a member of the livestock judging team while pursuing a dual major in ag communications and animal science. With her degrees, she hopes to attain a job as a junior activities director for a breed association.

Her Kansas Junior Angus Association state officer experience has provided her with excellent experience for her current position as an NJAA director. Jeana has attended LEAD conferences where she has seen a bigger picture of the beef industry and agriculture in general.

"It's taught me a lot about teamwork," she says. "It's important to have teamwork and not just try to do things on your own, but to try to work together, because a lot more will get accomplished if you do."

In the showing, Jeana has done well at all levels. At the NJAS in 1996, she had reserve division champion with a bred-and-owned bull. In 2001, she took first place with her steer. "It's very important to be involved in

more than just showing cattle," Jeana advises younger junior members. "It's really important if you are going to try to apply for your Bronze, Silver and Gold [awards]."

For Jeana, the team sales contest ranks just as high as being a state or national officer. "You have to be able to get out and market your own pedigrees and genetics," Jeana says. "Team sales give you a better understanding of EPDs and pedigrees and makes you a better public speaker." Jeana's experience has paid off. In the last eight years, she's been a part of a combined six winning teams in the Cook-Off and team sales competition.

Scholarships have aided Jeana on the path to her dreams. She feels the scholarships offered by the Auxiliary and Angus Foundation are of great assistance to the junior association.

"We are very thankful for everything that the Foundation does for us, as well as the Auxiliary, in helping us and giving us scholarships so we can pursue our goals," she says, "becoming more successful as we get older."

### Jason Schroeder

When Jason Schroeder, Clarence, Iowa, isn't studying animal science and ag business at Northwest Missouri State University (NMSU), he's working on the family operation, Schroeder Angus. He found his start in the NJAA by having two parents who show cattle, as well as an uncle to tag along with.

"I have been involved with the AIing and embryo transfer (ET) in our herd. I am very interested in this type of work and plan to continue my education in this program, along with marketing in livestock and crops." His interest for the breeding side of cattle came from his experience on the farm, trying to get better pedigrees and better calves. In the future, Jason sees himself coming back to the family farm and would like to start an ET business.

Jason credits his involvements with Angus associations as the key motivating factor in traveling to new places and meeting new friends. Jason has been active in the Iowa Junior Angus Association (IJAA) and the Eastern Iowa Junior Angus Association (EIJAA), holding many state officer



Jason Schroeder

positions. Jason has also served as a voting delegate and LEAD Conference participant and is a two-time IJAA scholarship winner.

In 2003, Jason's showing effort was rewarded with a third-place finish with his female, as well as recognition as a top-15 finalist in the showmanship competition. At the 2002 NJAS, Jason's team clinched second place in the team sales competition.

Despite his recent success, one of his most memorable NJAS moments was winning the bull show at the NJAS when he was only 10 years old.

Jason is the son of Doug and Glenda Schroeder, Clarence.

### Whitney Simmons

Angus, 4-H and FFA have gone hand-in-hand for Whitney Simmons, Franklin, W.Va., who began her career in the NJAA at



Whitney Simmons

the age of 1. She became active at 9 years of age when she started showing at preview shows, state fairs, regional shows and the NJAS. Her time spent in the ring has

led her to become active in the West Virginia Junior Angus Association (WVJAA) by serving as a state officer, and she has become active in the West Virginia Angus Association (WVAA).

Whitney has participated in poster, Cook-Off and quiz bowl contests. The quiz bowl is one of her favorite events because it tests her knowledge. "It's something that plays into my major, and I have fun with competing in the quiz bowl contest," she says.

As she phases out of showing cattle, Whitney plans to stay involved by helping her nieces and nephew. "I try not to live my life with regrets, but I regret not appreciating this show life at a younger age and realizing that it wouldn't last forever," she says. She would like to stress that it's important to get started early because eventually, you do grow up.

One thing Whitney would like to see in the NJAA is increasing membership and involving younger junior members. She recalls when she first started, saying, "It's intimidating. I think you're a little scared to jump in and get involved." To help her along, Whitney had a best friend who was four years older show her the ropes.

Whitney currently attends Virginia Tech

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at Blacksburg, Va., and will graduate in 2005 with a degree in agriculture and applied economics, as well as a minor in business. "I would like to work with farmers, 4-H members and FFA members in the future," Whitney says. She also plans on becoming involved with a junior association wherever she makes her permanent home.

Whitney is the daughter of Thomas and Nancy Simmons, Franklin. She's grown up watching her two older sisters show cattle, and her father has shown. "We come from a long history of showing cattle," she says. Whitney plans to continue the family tradition with her own children.

### Amanda Stai

Amanda Stai, New London, Minn., and her sisters own and operate Stai Angus Farm. They have worked to obtain a permit to have cattle on the property, which was originally part of her grandparents' farm.

Showing cattle didn't come naturally for Amanda, who was more than a little nervous when she began. It was the help of family friends that got her started in 4-H, and later FFA. She has since progressed to competing at the NJAS. Amanda came home from her first NJAS with a newfound excitement. "I came home with so many great ideas, grooming tools, and an idea of how much



Amanda Stai

fun and enthusiasm people can have for the Angus breed," she says.

The opportunities the Angus breed has given Amanda have truly amazed her. She participated in activities other than showing, such as the poster, quiz bowl and Cook-Off competitions. At the NJAS in 2003, she was a member of Minnesota's senior division quick-n-easy Cook-Off team that placed second in recipe, showmanship and overall. "Another great thing about junior members is that even though they compete against

you, they will lend a hand when you need help," Amanda says about her experience in the junior program.

In her herd, Amanda utilizes an AI program. "I can improve my calves by looking at characteristics of the parents and finding the best cross," she explains. Another benefit is that she can determine when calves

will be born and select for traits such as calving ease.

Amanda is currently studying to be a chiropractor with an ag minor at Ridgewater College in Hutchinson, Minn. From there she will attend a chiropractic school, where she expects to graduate in 2009. She works at Miller Chiropractic as a chiropractic assistant and office manager.

Amanda is the daughter of Gary and Kathy Stai, New London.

## NJAA Members earn Bronze and Silver awards

The Bronze and Silver awards are the first two levels of the National Junior Recognition Program (NJRP), which the American Angus Association began in 1972. To receive these honors, junior Angus members must apply for the awards and meet point requirements in many areas of participation.

Applicants are evaluated for their participation in junior Angus association activities; showmanship and leadership events; use of performance testing to improve their herds; and progress in producing and merchandising Angus cattle.

While the Bronze and Silver awards are presented to members throughout the year, Angus Productions Inc. (API) publishes summaries of the award winners in the May and September youth-focused issues of the *Angus Journal*. James Fisher, director of activities and junior activities for the American Angus Association, announced the following award winners since publication of the May 2004 issue.

### Bronze and Silver awards

Samantha Harl, 17, Hastings, Neb. She is the daughter of Tracy and Carrie Harl, Hastings.

Dana May, 18, Mineral Point, Wis. She is the daughter of Gregory May and Cathryn Kaiser-May, Mineral Point.

Roy Petteway, 18, Zolfo Springs, Fla. He is the son of Roy and Wendy Petteway, Zolfo Springs.

Ashley Wagner, 17, Genoa, Neb. She is the daughter of Lori Wagner, Genoa.

Elizabeth Williams, 14, Van Buren, Ark. She is the daughter of Fred and Shirley Williams, Van Buren.

### Silver Award

Kori Conley, 19, Clarksdale, Mo. She is the daughter of Bill Conley, Clarksdale.

### Bronze Award

Brittany Peacock, 14, Marianna, Fla. She is the daughter of Billy and Patti Peacock, Marianna.

— compiled by Corinne Patterson