

# Board Nominees Announced

Six candidates vie for seats on  
American Angus Association Board of Directors.

*Every year, candidates compete for five seats on the American Angus Association Board of Directors. As of Aug. 15, six Association members had announced their intentions to run for the Board. Their biographical sketches are presented here in alphabetical order. Three are incumbents. Board members elected Monday, Nov. 13, at the Annual Meeting in Louisville, Ky., will each serve a three-year term.*

## Al DeClerk

The Arkansas Angus Association board of directors and the Northeast Arkansas Angus Association unanimously endorse Al DeClerk, incumbent, Pocahontas, Ark., for



Al DeClerk

re-election to the American Angus Association Board of Directors. Al was born and has lived his entire life in an agricultural area of northeast Arkansas. He graduated from Saint Paul High

School in Pocahontas and attended the University of Arkansas (UA) at Fayetteville.

After college he returned to the family farm where he and his wife raised their four daughters. His lifetime commitment to Angus cattle began in 1943 when his late parents, A.C. and Helen DeClerk, purchased their first registered Angus cows. Engelberg Angus Farm (EAF), which is named for the community in which it is located, has been in continuous operation since that time.

Today, the farm is part of A.C. DeClerk Farms Inc., which consists of 2,500 acres of Ozark foothills and river delta land dedicated to the production of Angus seedstock, rice, soybeans and timber. Al has worked in production agriculture his entire life. "I don't ever remember not being in the Angus business," he says.

Al and his wife, Vicky, met in 1992 while both were attending the North American International Livestock Exhibition (NAILE) in Louisville, Ky. Today they manage

the farms' 150 registered cows with help when needed from Al's oldest daughter Laura, son-in-law Terry Tribble, and their daughter, Paige. Now 15, Paige caught the "show bug" from Vicky and has been a very enthusiastic participant in all aspects of the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) for the past five years. Daughters Beth, Amy and Paula, along with their husbands and children, reside out of the area but stay involved with the family farm as much as possible.

EAF markets bulls and females through state and local consignment sales and by private treaty. EAF uses artificial insemination (AI), embryo transfer (ET), and Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR<sup>SM</sup>), along with ultrasound data to improve herd performance.

Agriculture and Angus cattle have been Al's primary livelihood throughout his life, and EAF has received recognition in the field for many years. In 1992 EAF received the Arkansas Cattlemen's Association Outstanding Seedstock Producer of the Year Award. In 1993 EAF was certified as an American Angus Association Historic Herd.

In appreciation of their contributions to the Angus breed in Arkansas, the DeClerk family received the 2002 Arkansas Angus Heritage Award. Also in 2002, they donated a heifer to the Arkansas Junior Angus Foundation "Drawdown." This annual fundraiser brought in \$10,000, which was used to fund juniors' registrations for the Leaders Engaged in Angus Development (LEAD) Conference, Arkansas's annual Preview Show, awards and scholarships.

Al serves as treasurer and director of the Fourche Watershed Improvement District, which builds and maintains flood-control

structures and impoundments in northern Arkansas and southern Missouri. He has served for many years on the Randolph County Conservation District Board, holding the positions of chairman and treasurer. He is also a board member of the Ozark Foothills Resource Conservation and Development Council, which serves a diverse group of 12 counties in North Central Arkansas and promotes natural resource-based development in this very rural area. As an aviation enthusiast and commercial pilot, he owned and operated Flightway Inc., for several years. This business was an aircraft sales and maintenance facility, as well as an on-demand air taxi, based at the Pocahontas Municipal Airport.

Al is a founder of the Northeast Arkansas Angus Association, which sponsors spring and fall consignment sales each year at Charlotte, Ark. He has served as vice president, board member and sale coordinator for this multi-county organization. Al served from 1998 until 2000 as president of the Arkansas Angus Association. He is currently serving on the sale committee and board of directors of this association.

As a Board member of the American Angus Association, Al has been on the Finance and Planning committees and is currently serving on the Activities and Events and the Industry Relations committees, as well as being on the Angus Productions Inc. (API) Board. Al believes that his leadership experience; his hands-on, commonsense approach to business; and his ability to work with people qualify him to continue to serve as a Board member of the American Angus Association.

## Joe Hampton

The board of directors for the North Carolina Angus Association unanimously endorses Joe Hampton for re-election to



Joe Hampton

a second term on the Board of Directors of the American Angus Association.

Joe and his wife, Robin, operate Back Creek, an Angus seedstock operation that has focused on the production

of bulls for commercial cattlemen in the Southeast. Joe brings experienced leadership, having served two terms as president of the North Carolina Angus Association. He is

presently on the board of directors of the North Carolina Angus Association and is a past chairman of the Purebred Breeders Council of the North Carolina Cattlemen's Association.

Joe grew up on a dairy farm in the Piedmont area of North Carolina and was active in 4-H and the National FFA Organization. He served as a state FFA vice president and received the American Farmer Degree. He has received the Honorary State Farmer Degree for his volunteer work with livestock and dairy contests on the local and state level.

Joe received a bachelor's degree from North Carolina State University (NCSSU) in Poultry Science and worked for a vertically integrated poultry company as a field production manager. In 1981, Joe and Robin were married, he began his career in agriculture research with the North Carolina Department of Agriculture, and he and Robin purchased their first registered Angus cows.

Joe has been involved with agricultural research for 25 years, first serving as a research assistant, later as a unit manager, and for the last 18 years as a research station superintendent. This experience has provided exposure to a wide variety of agricultural commodities as well as experience dealing with various community, commodity and governmental agencies.

The production of functional bulls for the commercial cattle industry has been the guiding force in the decisions made by Back Creek. The initial foundation females for the herd were purchased from established performance herds in the Southeast and the Midwest. Performance records have been collected and utilized to improve the herd since the first calf crop. Through the use of ET and additional purchased females, the herd has grown, and the Hamptons market about 100 bulls annually. Herd expansion has been possible by capital generated from within the program.

This year, 70 registered females were sold in a female sale celebrating the "silver anniversary" of the Back Creek herd. A bull sale is scheduled to take place in October, where commercial females from Back Creek's commercial bull customers are to also be offered.

Joe and Robin are members of Saint Enoch Lutheran Church. Joe serves on the advisory council for the Agriculture Research Foundation at NCSSU. He is past president of the local Ruritan Club and has served as Chairman of the advisory committee for the NCSSU Animal Science Department.

The world today is dramatically different

from the world that existed when Joe and Robin purchased their first Angus in 1981. But some things don't change. The commitment to produce "bulls that will perform well enough to make money for the buyer," as Joe stated in an *Angus Journal* article in 1993, has not changed. However, the methods used to produce those bulls have improved dramatically. This reflects Joe's outlook. He has stated, "I'm not in favor of change, but I am in favor of improvement."

During Joe's first term on the Board of Directors for the American Angus Association he served as vice chairman of the Information and Data Management Committee. He has also served on the Finance Committee, the Activities Committee and the Commercial Relations Committee. He presently sits on the Board of Directors for Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) and the Angus Foundation.

When reflecting on his term on the Board of Directors, Joe states, "We have an excellent breed of cattle, along with a talented and motivated professional staff working with us. However, our breed's real strength to move forward is our membership."

### Steve Olson

The Texas Angus Association (TAA) has unanimously endorsed Steve Olson, Hereford, Texas, as a candidate for the American Angus Association Board of Directors.

Growing up on a farm and cattle operation, Steve developed a love for



Steve Olson

production agriculture at an early age. He showed 4-H steers and heifers and judged livestock before graduating from Hereford High School. Steve received a bachelor's degree in

animal science from Texas A&M University (TAMU) in 1974. He served as vice president of the Saddle & Sirloin Club, received the Distinguished Honor Award for the College of Agriculture, and judged on the meat evaluation and livestock judging teams at TAMU.

After graduation, Steve returned to Hereford to begin his diversified agricultural operation with his wife, Ginger. They presently have three grown children. Moriah and husband, Scott Pohlman, employed by

Cargill Meat Solutions, live in the Hereford area with their two sons. Sy and wife, Kristi, make their living from a diversified operation in production agriculture near Hereford. Kristi is also an area representative for Genex Corp. Joanna is employed as a 4-H Extension agent in Hereford.

All three children grew up showing Angus cattle and participating in the Texas Junior Angus Association (TJAA) and NJAA programs. Steve and Ginger were TJAA advisors for several years and learned how valuable this program is for educating future breeders. They also saw firsthand what an important role the NJAA plays in building leaders among our young people, as all three children served on the NJAA Board of Directors.

Living and working on a diversified farm and ranch has been Steve's lifelong occupation. His operation consists of a 200-head cow-calf Angus herd, including registered and commercial cows. Stocker cattle and commercial replacement heifers are wintered on wheat pasture and marketed in the spring. Steve utilizes consignment sales, private treaty and a recently developed Web site to market his Angus cattle. In addition to the cattle, crops of corn, wheat, cotton, sorghum silage and alfalfa hay are grown on an irrigated farm with center-pivot sprinklers.

Steve served on the TAA board of directors from 1989 to 1995. He classified Angus steers at all the major livestock shows across Texas, representing the TAA board. Additional leadership experience has come from serving on the budget and finance committee of the First Baptist Church of Hereford and on local cooperative boards such as the Hereford Farmers Gin and Consumers Fuel Coop.

Steve is also a member of the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association (TSCRA), the Texas Cattle Feeders Association, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), and the Greater West Texas Angus Association. Participation and involvement in these organizations has provided opportunities to keep abreast of constant changes in the cattle industry.

Involvement in Angus programs has given Steve a diversified background in the Angus breed. The use of AHIR, AI and carcass evaluation were among the first tools used to improve the breeding herd. Expected progeny differences (EPDs), ET and ultrasound of carcass traits have been added to the program to enhance genetic improvement in the herd.

Through the years, Steve has participated

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in the Tucumcari Bull Test, and has shown open Angus cattle at major shows, including the pen and carload show at Denver, Colo. Steve has retained ownership of his commercial Angus calves through the feedlot phase, marketing them on a grid basis. Additionally, the Olson family has hosted several Angus events at their ranch, including a field day for *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) retailers, and a tour stop on the 1999 National Angus Conference & Tour.

Steve feels very fortunate to have selected Angus breeding cattle in 1980 as he watched this great breed of beef cattle rise to No. 1 in the nation. He feels the American Angus Association has been greatly responsible for the rise in popularity of Angus cattle because of CAB, the AHIR program, open AI, EPDs, and the promotion and support of its members. The foresight and fortitude of previous staff and Board members have been instrumental in the accomplishments of the Angus breed.

Steve has the desire to see the Association continue to be the No. 1 beef breed in America. As new technologies appear on the horizon, challenges and decisions made by the Board of Directors will affect the future of the breed. He will be ready to move forward with new ideas that will benefit both the breed and its members. He will be cautious to protect the integrity of the breed, and the superior traits already established. His concern for the good of the entire membership will be foremost in making wise decisions.

Steve believes anything worth doing is worth doing right, and he will give his best to this position if elected. He sees this as an opportunity to serve the Association that has had such a positive effect on his family.

### Charles A. Rosson

The Virginia Angus Association board of directors unanimously endorses Charles A. Rosson of Louisa, Va., as a candidate for election to the American Angus Association Board of Directors.

Charles grew up on a diversified livestock and grain farm in Louisa, Va., and is a fourth-generation member of Quaker Hill Farm, a family-owned farming operation. Quaker Hill was originally established in 1742, with the Rosson family being the caretakers of the land for nearly a century. Charles farms in partnership with his younger brother, Lee C. Rosson and his father, Charles S. Rosson, who has been a lifetime member of the American Angus

Association since 1958. The family maintains a beef cattle herd of approximately 400 females, including Angus and three other breeds. They market approximately 100 bulls per year and are supporters of performance testing, consigning 40-50 bulls per year to



Charles Rosson

the Beef Cattle Improvement Association (BCIA) central bull tests in Virginia. Like his father, Charles graduated from Louisa County High School and received his American Farmer Degree. He was always involved with FFA and 4-H while growing up, exhibiting hogs and cattle on the local and national level, as well as successfully representing Virginia on the state 4-H Livestock Judging Team. He continued his education at Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa, and then graduated from Virginia Tech University, receiving a bachelor's degree in animal science.

Charles is currently working on a master's degree at Virginia Tech in career and technical education. Charles was a highly competitive member of the collegiate livestock judging team at Virginia Tech and studied under Gary Minish, currently the Dean of the College of Agriculture at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

Charles is married to the former Sherry Kauffman of Gahanna, Ohio. They have three children — Charlie, 5; Elizabeth, 3; and Ellen, 1. Their children are enthused about the farm and cattle, as are Charles' nephew and niece — Coleman, 6, and Haley, 3.

"It is very important that we leave the fifth generation of Rossons on Quaker Hill with a sustainable, viable agriculture enterprise to maintain the values and the way of life we so much enjoy; and the Angus business affords us that opportunity," Charles says.

Charles has a diverse business background that will bring a lot to the Board if he is elected. In addition to guiding the genetic development of the Quaker Hill Angus herd, he also worked as a district sales manager for Vigortone Ag Products for several years after college, supervising the district sales staff and recruiting new accounts. He also has an excellent working knowledge of liability and risk management, as he worked for nearly a decade for Virginia Farm Bureau Insurance

Co. as the local insurance agent for Louisa County.

Charles currently works for the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service as an agriculture and natural resource agent based in Louisa County and serves Planning District 10. Charles just completed a four-year term as mayor of Louisa. He is particularly proud of his time as mayor, as he led the town through a multimillion-dollar building project that included the construction of a new town hall and community arts center. Under his leadership, the town now has a 20-year master plan for the future that includes the total restoration and revitalization of the downtown area and the construction of a new town park. Being a strong, visionary and forward-thinking leader are traits that Charles has learned through hands-on experience.

Charles has served as president of the Central Virginia Angus Association as well as numerous state committees. The Virginia Angus Association recognized Charles as the Cattleman of the Year for 2005. In addition, he has served as a state board member of the Virginia Beef Cattle Improvement Association for two terms, and recently the farm was named the Virginia Seedstock Producer of the Year, and it was named to the 2006 Seedstock Producer Roll of Excellence by the Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) as a nominee for the organization's Seedstock Producer of the Year.

Charles states, "My goal is to help the Angus breed to remain on the forefront of the national cattle industry. We have the best product on the market, and we produce what the consumer desires. It is my hope that we will continue efforts to connect the Angus cow-calf producer to the consumer through the popularity of the CAB brand. These linkages are imperative if we are to continue to be the driver in the marketplace and if we are to maintain the superiority of the breed and the brand. I would appreciate the opportunity to serve you and the American Angus Association."

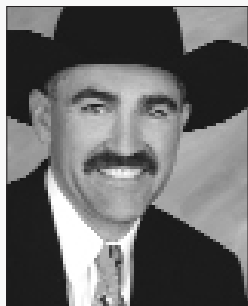
### Rob Thomas

A unanimous endorsement by the board of directors of the Western States Angus Association, Oregon Angus Association and Washington Angus Association accompanies Rob Thomas as he seeks a position on the American Angus Association Board of Directors.

Being a student of the breed and having



a strong commitment to the beef industry are the driving forces behind Rob's desire to serve. A second-generation rancher, Rob, wife Lori, and children Ty and Bryson, along with Rob's father, Bob, operate Thomas Angus Ranch of Baker City, Ore. This operation started in the 1960s when Bob and his late wife, Gloria, relocated their family to



**Rob Thomas**

the Northwest. Pioneer Angus breeders of the region, Bob and Gloria shared a dream to build an Angus operation that would supply bulls to commercial cattlemen.

Today, that dream is a reality. The operation manages 950 purebred cows, and with the assistance of cooperator and franchise herds, produces nearly 1,300 calves and markets more than 500 bulls annually.

A graduate of Kansas State University with a degree in animal science, Rob returned to the family ranch in 1987. Prior to graduation, Rob served as an intern for the NJAA in 1985.

"It was a tremendous learning experience for me," Rob says. "I gained an understanding of the workings of our Association. Extensive travel allowed me to see some of the great Angus operations nationwide, and I came home with an appreciation of the diversity cattlemen nationwide face each day."

Rob's goal upon returning to the family ranch was to increase the number of bulls marketed, as well as the average bull price. Ranch records indicate that the operation has accomplished just that, with an increase of 50% in the number of bulls marketed, along with a 20% increase in average price.

One reason for this strong demand is the ranch's intensive breeding program and strict culling procedures. All calves born on Thomas Angus Ranch are a product of AI. Only females that conform to their strict breeding season (25 days for cows and heifers) are retained in the Thomas program. Rob's goal is to produce large volumes of closely related bulls that will consistently sire quality progeny for his customers.

"The Angus Sire Summary is an integral part of our selection process. We evaluate every EPD and its accuracy on every sire we

use," Rob says.

Because their customers' needs are diverse, Rob and his family have created genetics that fit into all segments of the cattle industry. "Our goal is not only to produce a product that will consistently perform, but also to provide our customers with the genetics that best meet their needs," Rob says.

Matching their bulls to their customers' demands includes raising the bulls on roughage diets in feedlot conditions. More than 60% of the bulls are sold at eight months of age, and all bulls sold at Thomas Angus Ranch come with an unconditional guarantee.

As an additional service to their customers, Rob and his family have created a regional partnership with Beef Northwest Feeders. Through this grid-marketing program, Thomas Angus Ranch joins with its customers to feed out Thomas-sired calves. Owners are paid premiums on cattle that meet the requirements.

In speaking about Thomas Angus Ranch's involvement in this program, Rob says, "We are committed to adding value to our customers' operations and are willing to stand behind our bulls. Through our partnership with Beef Northwest, we are aligning our customers' herds' genetics with the current market demand."

Creating this alliance is just one of the ways that the Thomases continue to serve as leaders in their region. This leadership has not gone unnoticed. In 1997, Thomas Angus Ranch was recognized as BIF's Seedstock Producer of the Year. Rob continues to lead others through his roles as past chairman of the Oregon Cattleman's Association Beef Improvement Committee, past president of the Baker County Livestock Association and current advisory board member for the Eastern Oregon Agricultural Research Center. Rob has also been an invited speaker at the 2002 National Angus Conference & Tour and the CAB Building Blocks Conference. Additionally, Thomas Angus Ranch was a stop on the 2006 National Angus Conference & Tour.

During his first term on the American Angus Association Board of Directors, Rob served on the Information and Data Management Committee, the Industry Relations Committee and the Finance Committee. He has also been on the Board of the Angus Foundation.

In reflecting on this opportunity to

continue service on the Board of Directors for the Association, Rob says, "The Angus breed has never been in a better competitive position. We have a group of breeders and a database that work in concert to produce a product that meets the demands of the commercial cattleman, cattle feeder and ultimately the consumer. As long as we, as Angus breeders, listen to what the other segments of the industry are telling us, and we have the tools such as EPDs to select for those traits, the demand for Angus seedstock will continue to grow."

### **Cathy Watkins**



**Cathy Watkins**

The Indiana Angus Association unanimously endorses Cathy Watkins for a position on the Board of Directors of the American Angus Association.

Cathy graduated

with high honors from Michigan State University in 1970 with a degree in animal science. While there, she was a member of the meats judging team and the livestock judging team. Her team won the Ak-Sar-Ben Livestock Evaluation Contest and placed in the top five in all of the contests in which they participated. Individually, Cathy's best moment was when she placed fifth overall at the International Livestock Judging Contest in Chicago, Ill.

In 1970, Cathy married fellow judging team member, Bob Watkins. They eventually settled on the Angus farm started in 1945 by Bob's father. Beaver Ridge Farm is located in east central Indiana. Besides Angus cattle, the farm produces corn, soybeans, wheat, oats and hay.

Cathy's brother-in-law, Dan, and his wife, Mary, also live on the farm and teach school. Cathy's mother-in-law, Anna Mae, is still an active member of the family and lives on the farm. Cathy lost her own mother right after she and Bob married, and throughout the years, Anna Mae has become Cathy's surrogate mother.

Beaver Ridge Farm currently has 70 producing Angus cows. The herd has been enrolled in AHIR since its inception, and recordkeeping is an important part of the

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operation. Ultrasound images are also captured and recorded on all yearling cattle.

Cathy and Bob believe that to be successful, a program needs to have a focus and a target market. Their focus is to provide growth genetics to commercial and purebred producers. However, these growth cattle must be structurally sound, display strong udder quality, and must have the body capacity to allow them to stay in condition.

To infuse carcass traits into the herd, Beaver Ridge Farm uses high-marbling bulls when breeding heifers. Because some growth is sacrificed when breeding heifers, these matings must furnish other traits important to their program and to the industry.

After having annual production sales for more than 20 years, for the last 10 years Cathy and Bob have marketed their females privately. This allows them more one-on-one time with customers, many of whom are new to the Angus world.

Beaver Ridge bulls are marketed primarily through test stations, including the Midland Bull Test and the Indiana Beef Evaluation

Program. The program's attention to growth has translated into success in these tests for the past several years. Most notable is BR Midland, a bull raised by Beaver Ridge that both performed well and sold well at the Midland Bull Test sale in 2002.

Off the farm, Cathy has worked for the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for the past 32 years. Her specialty is the collection of delinquent taxes. For the past five years, she's worked in the Appeals office, arbitrating disputes between taxpayers and the collection function. Cathy's work experience has provided her with financial analysis skills and the ability to review a situation, weigh the facts, and make a sound, timely decision.

For the past 10 years, Cathy has served as secretary for the Indiana Angus Association. Besides planning the meetings for the board of directors and writing the minutes of these meetings, Cathy is the main source for communication with and among members. Cathy developed the use of an e-mail blast list to facilitate this communication. Information, especially when it is time-sensitive, can be relayed to members

instantaneously. Cathy believes that the success of any business or organization is largely dependent on communication.

Cathy strongly supports junior Angus programs, especially the educational contests conducted at the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS). She chaired the committee for these contests when the NJAS was in Indiana in 1998 and again this past summer. In addition, when the American Angus Auxiliary asked her to be in charge of the Crystal Awards, she enthusiastically accepted the challenge. These awards are given to a male and a female who earn the most points in the NJAS educational contests. Cathy developed the scoring system, designed the trophy award and each year oversees the tabulation of points for this award.

Cathy is enthusiastic about the Angus business. She believes we should be proud of and enjoy our strong position in the beef industry, but at the same time be ever vigilant in preparing for the challenges that face us now and in the future.

