



► **Left:** Pat Goggins' portrait was added to the Saddle & Sirloin Portrait Collection honoring the industry's elite leaders during a portrait presentation and banquet Nov. 13.

States, and he often rode the railcars with his cattle. In 1946, Pat's heifer was named senior yearling champion at state fairs in Nebraska, Wyoming and Colorado.

The next year, his steer, Bobo, won grand champion at the National Hereford Show in Great Falls, Mont. Ironically, the *Western Livestock Reporter* — which would later become a pivotal part of his life — published a feature on Pat and Bobo in 1948. A feed company also spotlighted the pair in a quarter-page ad in May 1948: "... On the range, in the feedlot and in the pens, he (Pat) is gaining the knowledge that will make the Northwest livestock industry greater in the years ahead."

Before that prophecy would ring true, young Pat first had many years of hard work to tackle. At Belgrade High School, he excelled as a center on the basketball team. After graduation in May 1948, he won a basketball scholarship to Western Montana College in Dillon. After his freshman year, he transferred to Montana State College in Bozeman.

Meanwhile, during his summers in high school and throughout college, Pat worked as a herdsman for the Jumping Horse Stock Ranch in Ennis, Mont. In the winter, he worked at the Bozeman Montana Winter Fair. Money was tight, so he sometimes quit college temporarily until he'd saved up enough to pay for tuition. But he succeeded.

In the spring of 1952, Pat — newly married to Florence "Babe" Becker — graduated from Montana State University-Bozeman with a degree in animal science.

Professional start

Fresh out of school, Pat initially took a job as an assistant to the herdsman at a Hereford operation near Vaughn, Mont. Next, for \$500 a month and a residence, he and Babe moved to Colorado Springs, Colo., where Pat worked as herdsman for the DeReimer-Atchison Hereford Ranches. Though he loved the job, Pat had the self-motivation — the "want to," as he calls it — to do more in his professional life. So in 1954, when Larry Gill with the *Montana Farmer-Stockman* in Great Falls, Mont., asked him to sell advertising for the monthly magazine, Pat readily accepted.

Though the new job came with a \$140 cut in monthly pay, Pat — backed 100% by his wife — remained determined to excel. For many months, the couple had only enough money to live in a converted chicken coop. Traveling in a used Buick, Pat sold ads and worked as a ringman at purebred livestock

CONTINUED ON PAGE 102

PORTRAIT COURTESY SADDLE & SIRLOIN CLUB

Industry Innovator

Lifelong livestock marketer Patrick K. "Pat" Goggins is inducted into Saddle & Sirloin Club.

by Sheryl Smith Rodgers

'Comon, boys, they're good cows! They're good 'uns!'

At age 80, Pat Goggins — a familiar face since the 1950s at weekly livestock auctions in Billings, Mont. — often cheers words of encouragement to buyers from his ringside seat. Keen-eyed and sharp-witted, he knows exactly what to look for in a top-rate animal. That basic, yet crucial ability — honed since his boyhood days in 4-H — has fueled Pat's lifelong passion for the American cattle industry.

As a strong leader and successful innovator, he has positively affected the business in many, many ways through his multiple professions as a publisher and columnist, a commercial and purebred cattleman, an auctioneer, and a livestock market owner. What's more, whether he's on the job or at home with his large family, Pat sets the bar high as an honest, hard-working man who truly cares about people and the cattle business he's so actively supported for nearly seven decades.

Early days

Hard work and saving money come second nature to Patrick King Goggins, the sixth son born to John and Pearl Goggins May 28, 1930, in Orland, Calif. Four years later, the farming family, left penniless by the Depression, returned to Montana, where John worked as a sharecropper. At age seven, young Pat landed his first job, jiggling 100-pound sacks of field beans before the next worker sewed them up. For three days of dirty work, Pat earned a gruff, "good job, kid," from his boss and one shiny dime, which he squirreled away with his marbles in a tobacco tin. Remarkably, Pat never spent that special coin and to this day keeps it in a safe place as a reminder of those hardscrabble times.

Throughout childhood, Pat always worked to help out his family. In school, he joined 4-H at age 11 and entered the showing for the first time. As a 4-H member, Pat was also on many outstanding livestock judging teams. His growing expertise with showing livestock sent him to arenas across the United

Patrick K. “Pat” Goggins CONTINUED FROM PAGE 100

auctions in Montana and Wyoming. Though ad sales shot up 500% at the magazine, Pat couldn't wrangle a commission. However, it wasn't long before Forrest Bassford and staff at the *Western Livestock Journal* in Denver noticed the hefty number of ads in the Montana paper and the young fieldman who was selling them. Sometime around 1955, Pat joined the *Journal*. This time, the job came with commissions.

Fieldman turned writer

Once again, someone took note of Pat's skill as a fieldman. This time it was Norman Warsinske, publisher of the *Western Livestock Reporter* in Billings, Mont. In February 1957, Pat joined the *Reporter* as general manager. As a fieldman, he earned twice the amount of commission he'd been making from ad sales. Better yet, he had a new creative outlet. The next month, Pat published his first personal column, “As I See It.” More than 50 years later, the weekly, front-page piece still retains the same upbeat, yet sensible voice that readers have come to respect.

“Optimism is contagious,” Pat wrote in his very first column. “It not only helps every phase of the industry from the producer and range man out on the range, from the purebred man to the feeder, to the packer, but it helps the national economy and toward good will. Optimism is contagious and we all need to get energetically sick.”

His own enthusiasm on the job boosted ad sales considerably in the *Reporter*. From town to town, and ranch to ranch, Pat logged

thousands of miles in his used VW Beetle. With a big box camera, he tirelessly photographed cattle and people. His trips — sometimes nearly 4,000 miles in length — crisscrossed North and South Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, Oregon, Washington, Nebraska and Idaho. But no matter what, Pat always sped home for family get-togethers and time with his three little daughters, Coreen, Laurie and Sandy.

Accomplished auctioneer

Not one to waste time, Pat taught himself a new skill while on the road. At livestock sales, he worked as a ringman, a fast-paced job that entails signaling new bids to the auctioneer. While working the ring, he also listened to and watched auctioneers. For fun at first, then with gritty determination, he auctioned off telephone poles as he sped down lonely stretches of rural highways. For long hours, he practiced and practiced. One day, when Norman Warsinske, who was also a well-known auctioneer, wanted a break during a sale at the Billings Livestock Commission, he pulled Pat in front of the microphone. Without skipping a beat, the young man chanted like a seasoned pro.

Starting with that first auction, Pat became one of the best purebred livestock auctioneers in America. During his 40-plus years in the business, he flew and drove all over the United States and worked some of the nation's most prestigious sales. In addition to his personable style of chattering, Pat gained respect for his credibility and in-depth

knowledge. Before a sale, he'd arrive early so he could look over every animal, review performance records, and jot down comments (“hatchet marks,” he calls them) about each. His behind-the-scenes research ensured that whatever he called out to get the bids higher was always based on fact, not guesswork. Performance, not pedigree and showmanship, mattered when it came to quality animals, he insisted. Pat also made sure that “stick-out” animals — the ones that he knew were top-notch — appeared in the ring

early on. “You can't put your best bull way down the line, or it sends the wrong message,” he explains. “And you've got to instill confidence in your buyers and sellers so that everyone gets the best deal they can.”

Milestones of the '60s

Between auctioneering and selling ads, Pat was earning top wages. One day, Norman, who admitted that he couldn't afford Pat any longer, offered to sell the newspaper to him. Pat agreed. In April 1961, the *Reporter's* front page announced the change in ownership. On the same page, Pat pledged that the newspaper — established in August 1940 by Norman to serve purebred cattle breeders — would continue to report the news, good and bad, as fairly and objectively as possible, “ever mindful of the livestock man and his protection in doing so.” Regardless of the consequences, Pat and his staff have consistently and fairly covered all sides of controversial issues through the years, while striving always to advocate on behalf of American ranchers and farmers.

In 1961, Pat made another significant purchase. Unexpectedly, he had the opportunity to buy the historic Vermilion Ranch, a former dairy operation located on the Yellowstone River northeast of Billings. While moving his family into the existing house (part of which was an old stage stop), Pat set right to work on developing a registered Angus herd.

Drawing from childhood memories, he remembered how a neighbor's buffaloes had a small teacup udder with high butterfat content and how their calves reached extra-high weight in the fall at 6 months old. So he decided to test his theory: “It isn't the volume of milk that counts; it's the quality of milk consumed.” By tracking butterfat content, he found that his females did indeed pass along the trait. Further experiments turned up another discovery: Seedstock bred to have extra butterfat in their genetic makeup also added marbling ability to offspring.

More milestones were yet to come before the 1960s ended. In 1967, twins Joe and John were born (the couple's last child, Mike, was born in 1971). Then in April 1968, the owners of the Public Livestock Market Center asked Pat if he might like to buy the complex, which opened in 1940. At first, he declined. But further negotiations landed Pat in the auction business. Right away, he came up with the new name of Public Auction Yards, which meant he could use the clever acronym PAYS. What's more, he also converted from private treaty sales to auctions in order to create a more competitive market. Then he set to work turning the yards into the largest stockyard facility in the Northwest.

To generate more interest, Pat bought full-



PHOTO BY JENA THOMPSON, AMERICAN ANGUS ASSOCIATION

► Angus breeders and others gathered to honor Pat Goggins, pictured with his wife, Babe, during the portrait presentation and banquet at the NAILE.

page ads in the *Billings Gazette* and ran television commercials. Soon sales grew from 62,000 head to more than 200,000 head a year. Since PAYS, Pat has acquired the Billings Livestock Commission (which hosts the largest consignment of performance and arena horses in the nation) and the Western Livestock Auction in Great Falls, Mont.

In 1968, Pat launched another newspaper, *Farm Livestock Weekly*, which reached out on a wider agricultural basis to farmers and ranchers who raised commercial cattle, hogs, sheep and grain. Wanting a personal connection with his new readers, Pat wrote a second weekly column, "Then and Now." After a series of name changes through the years, *Agri-News* merged with *Western Livestock Reporter* in October 2008 and became *Western Ag Reporter*, which today reaches 12,700-plus subscribers and 50,800 readers in 47 states.

Innovative thinker

Eyeballing an animal and estimating its weight is tough. As a livestock merchandiser, Pat realized that without crucial information, his customers — both sellers and buyers — wouldn't get the best price at auction. Nor would sales be completely transparent. So in the early 1970s, he conceived the idea of a ring scale and contacted a scale company to design one for him. When the new scale arrived at PAYS on two semi-trucks, it took 70 men to install the huge apparatus. Their sweat paid off. The ring scale, connected to a scoreboard, instantly posted weights and average weights per head. At first, people didn't trust the new system, but confidence soon replaced skepticism. Today, nearly all auction markets use ring scales, which have gone high-tech and digital.

Next — after watching instant replays during a football game — Pat came up with another brainstorm to help ranchers — especially those on remote ranches breeding quality animals — get top prices. For the first time in the world, PAYS hosted a video livestock auction in September 1976. The \$100,000 venture started with a film crew, outfitted with videotaping equipment in a four-wheel-drive truck. On the road, they toured 48 Montana ranches, where they filmed 14,700 head of feeder cattle and interviewed ranchers on their range and about cattle conditions.

On auction day, the edited footage aired on wide screens hoisted up in the PAYS arena. Bidders went wild. Buoyed with success, Pat's video sales continued. In 1978, his company — now known as Northern Livestock Video Auction — sold more than 19,000 feeder cattle in less than three hours. Plus, the cattle received prices \$1.50 to \$4 per hundredweight (cwt.) more than market

prices for that day anywhere in the country.

Today, Northern Livestock Video Auction and other companies market several million cattle worldwide every year through video auctions, both on the Internet and via satellite on television.

Purebred and commercial breeder

Since his start with the Vermilion Ranch, Pat Goggins ranks among the nation's top registered Angus producers, purebred and commercial. He was one of the first breeders to synchronize estrus and artificially inseminate (AI) his herds. Then and now, commercial heifers are scanned by ultrasound, sorted and sold in uniform groups according to calving dates, who they were bred to, and whether they are carrying a bull or heifer calf. Today, estrous synchronization and AI is standard at many breeding operations.

Pat and his family also manage other Angus operations. On 30,000 acres at the Pryor Creek Ranch south of Billings, they develop 2,300 commercial replacement Angus and 500 registered Angus calves. In eastern Montana near Miles City, their 50,000-acre Diamond Ring Ranch manages 1,300 commercial mother cows and backgrounds 7,500 Angus steers. Every January, the Diamond Ring Ranch Steer Sale attracts buyers from across the country. Now a video auction, the event markets as many as 40,000 head. And at PAYS, Pat and his family twice a year host outstanding performance sales, which are always heavily attended. Together, the fall and spring sales market nearly 7,000 Angus bulls and females.

Family comes first

Speaking of family, Pat's has swelled to 42 members — six children, five spouses, 16 grandchildren and (so far) seven great-grandchildren.

"Of all the achievements that the Lord has allowed me to make, the greatest is our family," he says with heartfelt emotion. Close-knit as a whole, the group gathers every week for Sunday breakfast after church. Most of the children and their spouses are also involved in some facet of the Goggins' many businesses. John works as general manager, columnist and fieldman for the *Western Ag Reporter*; Joe works both in the family's cattle business and as an auctioneer. Mike works full time in the main office. Bob Cook, who's married to Coreen, is involved at the livestock markets and Vermilion Ranch; their son, Bill, is an auctioneer. Jeff Mosher, who's married to Laurie, runs the farming operation, and their sons Brandon and Russell work at Vermilion Ranch. Roger Jacobs, who's married to Sandy, works in the family's real estate company, and their daughter, Jackie, is office manager at

Northern Livestock Video Auction.

Two years ago, Pat collapsed at a grandchild's basketball game and was rushed to the hospital. He survived a heart attack and a stroke. After a lengthy stay in the hospital, Pat underwent 17 days of strenuous therapy at the New Hope Rehabilitation wing, part of the St. Vincent Healthcare system in Billings. In appreciation for the care, Pat donates the sales made from Lot #17 at every spring and fall sale to New Hope.

Committed to the industry

Throughout his life, Patrick Goggins — publisher and columnist, commercial and purebred cattleman, auctioneer, livestock market owner, real estate broker and devoted family man and community member — has consistently promoted and supported the American cattle industry. For his entire career, Pat has fought for the betterment of livestock agriculture and bolstered positive attitudes within the industry during tough times. His innovative thinking has changed the way many ranchers do business in huge ways, and his outlook on agriculture has garnered respect from families on farms all the way to top leaders in state and federal government. In years past, both Presidents George Bush and George W. Bush personally called Pat, seeking his advice. Ross Perot, before he ran for the presidency in the 1990s, even flew Pat down to Texas for a brainstorming session.

Efforts recognized

"During the last 50 years, Goggins built his livestock auction business into one of the largest and most successful in the country," says Terry Cotton, general manager of Angus Productions Inc. (API) and chairman of the nominating committee. "Goggins is also a committed stockman, having built his registered Angus herd, Vermilion Ranch, into one of the nation's largest and most successful. His ranch is a model of environmental and sustainable stewardship. And the genetics he has developed can be found in herds across America."

To honor Pat for his contributions to the industry, he was inducted into the Saddle & Sirloin Club, which hung his portrait in the West Hall of the Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center (KFEC) during a special ceremony Nov. 13 in conjunction with the North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE) in Louisville, Ky.

The Saddle & Sirloin Portrait Collection was founded in 1903, and features an elite collection of oil paintings honoring leaders in the livestock world over the past three centuries. Today, many of the 340-plus portraits are displayed in the West Hall of the KFEC. 