

Honoring Angus Commitment

Five individuals honored for contributions to the Angus breed.

by Shelia Stannard

Five longtime Angus producers have been honored for their commitment to the Angus breed and programs of the American Angus Association. Jesse Bontecou, Millbrook, N.Y.; Eddie Sydenstricker, Mexico, Mo.; Dale Runnion, Longmont, Colo.; and Robert Weaver, Peoria, Ill., were inducted into the Angus Heritage Foundation during Angus activities at the North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE) Nov. 11-14, 2006. Colin Kennedy, formerly of Webster City, Iowa, was inducted posthumously.

Each year the Association honors individuals who have made significant contributions through their time and dedication, financially, via research efforts to enhance the breed or through their breeding of superior Angus cattle. A committee nominates and selects the individuals for induction to the Angus Heritage Foundation, which was started in 1983.

Inductees and their families receive a framed certificate for their achievement; their name is engraved on a permanent plaque that hangs at the Association headquarters; and their brief biography and photograph are included in a book, which will be published again in 2010.

Following are biographies of each of the inductees highlighting their contributions to the Angus breed.

Jesse Bontecou

Bontecou has been breeding and promoting purebred Angus cattle for more than 60 years in the heart of Dutchess County. Rally Farms was established by his father, Sen. Frederic Bontecou, in 1929 and is today one of New York's largest and oldest Angus farms. It consists of 2,800 acres with about 135 mother cows.

Rally Farms cattle have been shown across the country, and the family showed the grand champion bull in Denver, Colo., in 1982. Exported cattle and semen have gone abroad to Europe and South America. Jesse is a past president of the New York Angus Association and served for two terms as a director of the American Angus Association.



► **Left:** Jesse Bontecou of Rally Farms, Millbrook, N.Y., was inducted into the Angus Heritage Foundation. Bontecou is pictured with his wife, Gayle.

► **Right:** Former general manager of the *Angus Journal*, Dale Runnion of Longmont, Colo., was inducted into the Angus Heritage Foundation. Runnion is pictured with his wife, June.

Dale Runnion

Runnion joined the *Aberdeen-Angus Journal* as a fieldman in 1952, after a short stint with the *Drovers Journal* and serving in World War II. During his 16-year career, which included time as advertising manager and general manager of the *Angus Journal*, he revitalized the field staff, and they contributed to the breed's rapid growth in the 1950s and 1960s.

He was brought back to serve as general manager of the *Angus Journal* in 1981 when it was purchased by the Association. Today, many of his policies and key staff members promoted by him are still serving the Angus breed.

Runnion is a native of Ohio and attended Ohio State University. He currently resides in Longmont, Colo., with his wife, June, who also served as a service representative to *Angus Journal* advertisers.

Eddie Sydenstricker

Sydenstricker served as the first president of the first junior Angus association ever formed in 1956, helping set the direction for modern-day junior Angus programs. About 25 years later, daughters Kim and Lee Ann both served as officers in that same Missouri Junior Angus Association.

Sydenstricker has maintained a leadership role both in farm machinery and Angus cattle in Missouri, receiving the University of Missouri Livestock Person of the Year award in 1995, the Certified Angus Beef Seedstock Commitment to Excellence Award in 1997, and the Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) Seedstock Producer of the Year award in 2001.

Sydenstricker served on the boards of the American Angus Association and the Missouri Angus Association. He is a founding partner in ORGen, Inc., and serves within the leadership cabinet of the Angus Foundation's Vision of Value: Campaign for Angus.

Robert Weaver

Weaver, co-founder of Weaver Angus Farm in 1935, is a well-known breeder and exhibitor of Angus cattle. The operation, based at

CONTINUED ON PAGE 188



PHOTOS BY SHAUNA ROSE HERMEL

Peoria, Ill., hosted the first Illinois Junior Angus field day in 1965, and Robert has been a positive influence for the breed in Illinois and across the nation ever since.

The Weavers have exhibited a grand champion at the National Western Stock Show (NWSS) every decade since the 1960s. Since first exhibiting at the inaugural NAILE in 1974, Robert has missed exhibiting at only one.

In addition to being a successful Angus breeder, Weaver and his wife, Virginia, share a passion for their carriage collection and teams of Hackneys and Gelderlanders. He is a member of the New York and British Coaching Clubs and is involved with the Salvation Army and the Youth Home for troubled young men.

Colin Kennedy

Kennedy was a well-known and highly regarded livestock journalist and photographer based in Webster City, Iowa. He started his career in journalism in 1929 with the *Drovers Journal*. He later worked for the *Aberdeen-Angus Journal*, where he served as managing editor. Kennedy is likely most remembered for his regular column in the *Angus Journal*, "Along Angus Trails," where he displayed his deep love for Angus cattle, along with his thoughtful insights and keen wit as he documented the story of the Angus breed throughout the second half of the 20th century.



► Robert Weaver of Weaver Angus Farm, Peoria, Ill., was inducted into the Angus Heritage Foundation. Weaver is pictured with his wife, Virginia.



► Eddie Sydenstricker of Sydenstricker Genetics, Mexico, Mo., was inducted into the Angus Heritage Foundation. Pictured are (from left) Dan Fusz, Connie and Eddie Sydenstricker, Lee Ann Fusz, and Kim Monte.



► Colin Kennedy's family was on hand to accept his induction into the Angus Heritage Foundation during the Annual Banquet. Inducted posthumously, Kennedy was a well-known and highly regarded livestock journalist and photographer based in Webster City, Iowa. Pictured are (seated, from left) Jackie Hanson, Audrey Kennedy Burtnette, Janet Kennedy, Melissa Kennedy, (back row, from left) Richard Burtnette, Joe Kennedy, David Kennedy, Colin Kennedy and Chris McKinley.