

Man of Impact

The word impact embodies the lifelong achievements of educator, stockman and breed advocate Dave Hawkins.

by **Carrie Heitman**, American Angus Association, & **Lynsey Meharg**, 2013 Angus Journal intern

Dave Hawkins' first trip to the Saddle & Sirloin Club Portrait Gallery was in 1956. His parents took him to the Chicago International, and together they made a tour around the famous portraits hanging on the walls, each depicting a lifetime of service to the livestock industry.

More than a half a century later, Hawkins is now among those given the ultimate recognition for his efforts.

"Seeing the gallery really made an impression on me that day," says Hawkins, professor emeritus in animal science at Michigan State University (MSU). "To think that I have been able to put together a career to be eligible for not only consideration, but also selection, is an unimaginable honor."

The Saddle & Sirloin Portrait Gallery is the largest gallery of portraits devoted to a single industry. Each year, an individual who has left a lasting impact on the livestock industry is honored as his or her portrait is hung in the gallery. Today, nearly 350 portraits — including educators, publishers, editors, judges and breeders — are displayed in the West Wing of the Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center in Louisville, Ky.

On Nov. 17, the industry celebrated Hawkins' career during a special presentation at the North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE) in Louisville. The impact Hawkins has made on the industry and the people within was celebrated in a traditional ceremony as his portrait was hung with those he had admired as a child.

"The first time I ever met him and his family was in 1982 at the junior nationals held in Milwaukee," says nominating committee member Julie McMahon French. "I remember seeing him with his little daughters and him teaching them. What struck me was that he was a teacher of his profession to his own children, but in a different way."

The Hawkins family has had a strong commitment to the beef cattle industry. Hawkins and his wife, Kathleen, met while exhibiting cattle at livestock shows in Ohio. After their marriage in 1967, they settled in



PHOTO COURTESY SADDLE & SIRLOIN PORTRAIT GALLERY

► Dave Hawkins of Michigan State University has impacted countless students, colleagues and friends. For his lifelong commitment to the worldwide cattle industry, he was inducted into the Saddle & Sirloin Portrait Gallery in 2013. Digital readers can click the photo above to watch a video tribute to Hawkins produced by Angus TV. The tribute is available online at www.youtube.com/watch?v=I57t_wEaSV0.

Michigan, where they still maintain an Angus herd.

A long-time supporter of the livestock industry and the opportunities within it, Hawkins began his career at Michigan State University, where he served as the assistant livestock-judging coach before becoming an extension specialist, professor and faculty coordinator of the Beef Cattle Teaching Center.

Under his leadership, the Center became a world-recognized source of superior beef cattle and exhibited or co-exhibited more than 60 grand or reserve grand champions at national beef cattle shows in Canada and the United States. In addition, MSU has leased bulls to major artificial insemination (AI) companies and exported cattle, semen or embryos to every continent except Antarctica.

As a trusted cattle evaluator, Hawkins has been invited to judge most of the major beef cattle breed shows in the United States, as well as national shows in Australia, Canada and Denmark. He has judged cattle in 36 states, seven national breed shows, six junior national breed shows, and is the only person ever to have twice judged national Angus shows at the NAILE and the National Western Stock Show.

Because of his expertise, Hawkins has been invited to present seminars in North and South America, Australia and Europe on beef cattle breeding, selection and genetic improvement.

Teaching

Hawkins may be a brilliant livestock evaluator and breeder; however, those aren't the only reasons behind his induction. According to his students, Hawkins worked continuously to ensure their continued excellence.

"He has had an immensely deep group of students who have worked for him," says



► Hawkins and his wife, Kathleen, met while exhibiting cattle at livestock shows in Ohio. After their marriage in 1967, they settled in Michigan, where they still maintain an Angus herd.

**"An advisor
must encourage
students to
step out of their
comfort zones and
try new things."**

— Dave Hawkins

Jason Rowntree, chair of Hawkins' nominating committee and MSU professor. "Most of us weren't great academically — we weren't 4.0 students — but he looked at us for our strengths and helped us grow."

Over the course of his career, Hawkins served as coordinator of animal science undergraduate programs for 21 years, personally taught nine different courses involving more than 7,000 students and advised more than 1,850 undergraduates.

The effect Hawkins has had on his students doesn't end there. He has led three

MSU Study Abroad programs to Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland and England; served as major professor for 14 graduate students; and was a part of the committees for 36 other graduate students. He has authored or co-authored 42 papers and abstracts in peer-reviewed journals, 81 papers in experiment station reports, 11 extension publications and 80 articles in other publications.

Hawkins' basic approach to teaching was

to search for the potential in each student and then work to reach that potential.

"He looked at us for our strengths, and [he] didn't tell you what to do," says Rowntree. "What he did was help you develop skill sets to make better decisions. He was always a great listener."

Prior to a course, Hawkins took time to familiarize himself with the backgrounds and career plans of each of his students. This information enabled him to teach relevant material, but also to be a personal mentor to his students throughout their time at Michigan State and beyond.

Hawkins' purebred-livestock-merchandising course, the first of its kind in the United States, became a model for other universities. It combined production, producers and purpose with students learning the basics and practicing their skills while learning from industry professionals. The ultimate application of the course came as students developed a budget, prepared ads for publications, prepared catalog pages, prepared animals for the MSU sales and learned how much effort is required for success, according to materials developed by the Hawkins nominating committee. Students learned life skills and made memories that can never be duplicated in a textbook, all while working for a sale that attracted buyers from across the nation.

Over the years, Hawkins has hosted and taught beef production to students from Argentina, Australia, Botswana, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Mexico, Northern Ireland, Puerto Rico, Venezuela and Zimbabwe. He was invited to return to Australia in 1998 to conduct seminars in New South Wales, Queensland, Tasmania

► Dave Hawkins, MSU professor emeritus, explains what it meant for him to be inducted into the famed Saddle & Sirloin Portrait Gallery for his commitment to improving the beef industry and inspiring the next generation of leaders in this *Am Angus* segment published Nov. 28. Digital readers can click the photo to access the segment, which is available online at www.youtube.com/watch?v=FCgp4zewu58.



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and Victoria, as well as in Herning, Denmark, in 2000.

Cattle breeding

The MSU Beef Center provides students with work experience in breeding, feeding, management and merchandising of quality beef cattle, while furnishing examples of high-performance Angus and Polled Hereford cattle for selection and evaluation courses. It also hosts applied research projects related to nutrition and management. Each year, more than 700 students enroll in classes that utilize cattle from the unit.

Under Hawkins' direction, ABS Global, Accelerated Genetics, Curtiss Breeding Service, Genex Cooperative Inc. and Select Sires Inc. have leased MSU sires for semen production. The center has also exported live cattle to Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada and Mexico, as well as semen and embryos to Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, New Zealand, Poland, Russia, South Africa, Uruguay and Zimbabwe. As a result of Hawkins' leadership, the MSU Beef Center has become an important source of genetics for cattle breeders throughout the world.

"He's made a huge impact with breeders and students. I bet there's no way to quantify how many times he's made a difference," says French. "Dr. Hawkins has really been an ambassador for beef breeds — particularly Angus and Hereford — and American agriculture."

The introduction of new technologies and science into the teaching program has been important to Hawkins as it prepares MSU students to step into a career as soon as they graduate. The impressive achievements of the MSU purebred beef program have also served to create a demand for MSU faculty, staff and graduate students to serve as judges



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for local, regional, national and international livestock shows, according to materials developed by the Hawkins nominating committee.

"He is the new-age stockman at heart. He has a heart for the land and livestock," says Rowntree. "While he maintained that, he was such a great mixture of the old and the new."

Industry service

Though his achievements and impact are almost too numerous to list, Hawkins remains an extremely humble, kindhearted and service-oriented person, says Rowntree.

Hawkins served as superintendent of the National Collegiate Livestock Judging Contest from 1996 to 2005 before receiving the Intercollegiate Livestock Coaches

Association Service Award in 2005.

From 1988 to 2008, Hawkins served as the co-chairman of the Michigan Cattlemen's

Association (MCA) Bull Performance Testing Program, for which he coordinated all aspects of the test and pushed the industry to pursue new genetic tools for beef improvement. The MCA program was one of the first to use DNA marker tests as a measure of beef quality.

Hawkins served on the MCA Purebred Council, the Michigan Beef Expo Committee and has served as president of the Michigan Angus Association, the Michigan Polled Hereford Association and on the University of Maryland Wye Angus Advisory Board.

At home at Michigan State, Hawkins served as the faculty coordinator for the MSU Pavilion for Agriculture and Livestock Education from 1996 to 2007. His leadership helped establish the Pavilion as the regional hub for animal events, which played a vital role in recruiting outstanding students to Michigan State University.

As a student and colleague, Rowntree may have the most unique perspective of his former professor's influence on the livestock industry.

"He's a historian. He understands the history of the livestock industry better than anyone in the nation," says Rowntree. "Because of his immense understanding, he's been able to weave together our past while also embracing the future."

"I believe that livestock are living art. They can be beautiful, as well as functional."
— Dave Hawkins

Remembering our heritage

Established in 1903, the Saddle & Sirloin Club Portrait Gallery comprises a collection of more than 350 portraits of past livestock industry leaders who have changed the course of the industry. It was originally housed in the top floor of the Purebred Livestock Records Building in Chicago, Ill., before finding a home at the Kentucky Fair & Exposition Center in Louisville, Ky., in 1977. To ensure the continued importance and safety of the Saddle & Sirloin Club portraits, many in the livestock industry are rallying to raise awareness of the relevance of the Saddle & Sirloin Club Portrait Gallery to future generations.

Committee members have worked to make Saddle & Sirloin relevant to as many people as possible, incorporating a website (www.livestockexpo.org/ssclub.aspx) and online auction into the awareness and fundraising missions.

"It is so ultimately important to honor those giants who have allowed us to stand on their shoulders," says Jason Rowntree. "We must honor them, remember them and understand the impact they have had on our industry."

Without remembering our past, we could lose sight of who we are and where we are headed, Rowntree emphasizes. "We cannot forget. It is time that we, as an industry, take an interest."