

Auxiliary Names Distinguished Woman

American Angus Auxiliary charter member Bette Votaw recognized in Louisville, Ky.

by *Carrie Heitman, American Angus Association*

In 2012, the American Angus Auxiliary celebrated 60 years of preparing young women for the future, educating consumers about the beef industry and supporting junior activities. It is a legacy built by countless volunteers dedicated to the Angus breed. It was indeed appropriate for the organization to this year recognize charter member Bette Votaw, Wellfleet, Neb., as a Distinguished Woman.

Bette was honored at the 61st Annual Breakfast of the American Angus Auxiliary Sunday morning, Nov. 11, during Angus events at the North American International Livestock Exposition in Louisville, Ky.

As Auxiliary advisor Barbara Ettredge, Pilot Point, Texas, described the award's recipient, all eyes turned to Bette. While Ettredge transported the audience back in time, sharing Bette's devotion to the Auxiliary, tears began to flow down Bette and daughters Kathy and Kerri Ann's faces. One can only imagine the memories Bette recalled as she was reminded of the moment that changed her life forever.

It was 1952. Bette and her husband, Eli, were stepping through the doors of the Chicago International Live Stock Show. Strolling past the rich black, beautiful Angus cattle, Bette was transformed from city girl to ranch wife.

The Chicago International was also where Bette met a small group of energetic women who asked her to join the American Angus Auxiliary. Without hesitation, Bette agreed and became a guiding light with her quiet, steady demeanor and wisdom.

Bette served as an Auxiliary officer for three years before

resigning due to her mother's health. Ten years later, in 1993, Bette returned to lead the organization. During her presidency, she, along with Angus enthusiasts from across the country, entertained international visitors during the World Angus Forum in Rapid City, S.D. Since that time, Bette has served as chairman and member of several Auxiliary committees.

Together in their 62 years of marriage, Bette and Eli built the historic E Bar V Angus Ranch. The couple was inducted into the American Angus Association's Angus Heritage Foundation in 1999 and received the Nebraska Angus Association Pioneer Producer Award in 2006. Eli was a devoted leader in the beef industry. He was a lifetime member of the American Angus Association and served on its Board of Directors. During his two terms, he was instrumental in establishing the Certified Angus Beef (CAB) Program, which has grown from a committee to an LLC. Eli also helped organize the Southwest Nebraska Angus Association and served as its secretary-treasurer for several years.

Bette's constant drive and passion for the Angus business is instilled in her children, as well. Her daughters, Kathy Marie (Louis) Dubs, Billings, Mont.; Kerri Ann (Steven) Kliever, Henderson, Neb.; and the late Christine Sue Votaw Vinton received Auxiliary scholarships in 1970, 1973 and 1977. Bette was "The Queen Mother" of both the 1973 and 1977 Miss American Angus. Her daughters also served as Nebraska Angus queens, and Block and Bridle queens at the University of Nebraska.

Without Bette's knowing it, Eli and Auxiliary members were sketching out a plan for her to receive the Distinguished Woman award. Although Eli passed away before Bette could accept the honor, she told the crowd she knew he was with her in spirit.

While Bette stood on the Auxiliary Breakfast stage sharing her gratitude for the Distinguished Woman award, she described a marriage to not only her husband, but the Angus business as well.

"Thank you for this award," she said. "It was my family's privilege to be in the Angus business. We never had anything else in mind besides promoting Angus beef."



Editor's Note: *Carrie Heitman is communications coordinator for the American Angus Association.*



► Bette Votaw (seated) was honored as a Distinguished Woman during the American Angus Auxiliary's 60th Anniversary Breakfast Nov. 11. In recognition of the honor, she was presented a print of C.J. Brown's Auxiliary's 60th Anniversary painting. Pictured with Bette are (from left) daughter Kerri Ann Kliever, Henderson, Neb.; Anne Patton Schubert, Taylorsville, Ky.; Lois Foster, Niles, Mich.; Barbara Ettredge, Pilot Point, Texas; and daughter Kathy Marie Dubs, Billings, Mont.



PHOTOS BY SHAUNA ROSE HERMEL

► Above: "It was my family's privilege to be in the Angus business," Bette said, sharing her gratitude. "We never had anything else in mind besides promoting Angus beef."

► Left: Daughters Kathy and Kerri Ann anticipate when Bette will realize she is the charter member Barbara Ettredge is introducing as recipient of the Auxiliary's Distinguished Woman award.

