

Achieving the

Dedication, hard work and leadership bring reward in final year of junior eligibility.

by *Linda Robbins*

Nineteen National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) members brought their junior careers to the ultimate conclusion with the Gold Award in 2009. The 1980-1981 NJAA Board of Directors, along with the American Angus Association Junior Activities Department, developed the multi-tiered award system. The Gold Award is the third and highest honor offered through the National Junior Recognition Program (NJRP).

To receive the Gold Award, students must be past Bronze and Silver award recipients who are in their last year of eligibility as junior members. Based on points earned throughout their junior experiences, members must earn a total of 3,000 points — 1,000 additional points than required to receive Bronze and Silver awards.

Points are earned in Association activities, competitive activities, performance-testing activities and producing and merchandising Angus cattle. Gold Award winners receive a specially designed pin, cast in gold. Generous support from Angus Foundation donors make this award possible.

Brief biographies of each of this year's Gold Award recipients follow.

Lindsey Brown



Lindsey Brown

Lindsey Brown, Federalsburg, Md., a student at Delaware Technical & Community College majoring in agribusiness management and accounting, has a plan for her life. Her one-year goals are to graduate from college and finish her last year as an Angus junior. As the Maryland junior representative and the Maryland Angus Queen, and with her commitment to showing her cattle, this last year should be a full one.

"I have learned a lot about showing Angus cattle in the past and I am still

learning new things at each show I go to," Lindsey says. The daughter of Michael and Charlotte Brown, Lindsey has competed at the county, state and national levels, earning an Honorable Mention in the National Junior Angus Showmanship Competition.

Her five-year goals are to start a career with either a farm credit organization or a local accounting office, and to breed Angus cattle. While she is well on her way to achieving her goals, Lindsey would add one more, she says.

"As I finish college and start my career I will always return to help the juniors."

Emma Collins



Emma Collins

Emma, daughter of Ivan and Melanie

Kiani, Morton, Miss., is a student at Hinds Community College studying agriculture information sciences. She says she will never forget the day she received the letter in the mail from

the NJAA saying this was her last year as a junior member.

"The walk back from the mailbox was long and sad," she says. "I have had a number of great memories and life goals that were accomplished as a junior member, such as winning first place with a heifer in Tulsa, Okla., and in the Cook-Off."

Emma has served as secretary for the Mississippi Junior Angus Association and as the Mississippi Angus Queen. She received an American Angus Auxiliary Scholarship in 2008 and has served as the beef council director for the Mississippi Junior Cattlemen's Association.

Emma says she would like to work with the Mississippi Cattlemen's Association and/or in a communications role within the beef industry once her school years come to an end.

"The National Junior Angus Association

is and will always be a huge part of my life, and I am grateful for everything," she says.

Lynsey Frey



Lynsey Frey

"Both my state and the national junior associations have been great to me and have given me a chance to be me," Lynsey says. "I say this because I am a girl who loves being around cattle and showing."

Lynsey, an animal science and ag economics major at North Dakota State University, has shown her cattle and participated in showmanship contests at the county, state and national level. She is the secretary of the North Dakota Junior Angus Association, and has served as the North Dakota Angus Queen.

In addition to pursuing a career in her home state with an organization that deals with both agriculture and finance, the daughter of Arlen and Lois Frey of Granville, N.D., also wants to earn a degree in photography. "I have loved taking pictures my whole life," Lynsey says.

She knows there will be challenges to overcome in pursuing both interests, but she thinks it will be worth it.

"Most importantly," Lynsey says, "I would like to stay involved within my family's purebred operation and continue to raise high-quality cattle that are useful to any producer."

Sydney Geppert

A student at South Dakota State University's College of Nursing, Sydney credits the personal qualities she possesses to the values she learned growing up on a ranch and being involved in Angus associations.

"I have learned communication skills, recordkeeping, responsibility and leadership skills that I will use for the rest of my life," she says. "I plan on utilizing these qualities,

Gold Standard

finishing my degree and entering a master's degree program in nursing anesthesia. Another long-term goal of mine is to continue producing functional, high-quality Angus cattle."

The daughter of Kevin and Helen Geppert of Mitchell, S.D., Sydney has served as the secretary/treasurer for the South Dakota Junior Angus Association and represented her home state in the 2008 National Junior Angus Showmanship Competition, receiving an Honorable Mention.

In addition to the poster and Auxiliary-sponsored All-American *Certified Angus Beef*[®] (CAB[®]) Cook-Off contests at the NJAS, Sydney participated in the mentoring program and understands the importance of remaining active in the associations that made her the person she is today.

Sydney hopes to one day raise another generation of Angus producers and to continue to build her Angus herd.

Kevin Gleason

Kevin, a student at Blinn College in



Kevin Gleason

Brenham, Texas, until transferring to Texas A&M University for the fall 2009 semester, intends to earn a degree in agriculture leadership and development. The son of Mike and Kerri Gleason,

Midlothian, Texas, watched his older brother show cattle as a 4-H member and wanted to join and show himself.

"My school didn't have an 'organized' judging team," Kevin says, "but my FFA advisor saw that I was truly interested in this contest and let me compete, even if our team consisted of just me."

When he waited, as his parents suggested, to take leadership roles in the Texas Junior Angus Association until he was older and better prepared to lead, he "worked his way up" to become the president for two years.

Looking ahead, Kevin says that while he has had success in junior contests at both

the state and national levels, he is looking forward to contributing to the Association as an adult member.

"No matter where my career takes me, I will always be an Angus breeder and a supporter of the Angus breed and the junior programs they offer," Kevin says.

Rebecca Hurst

"My years of involvement in the Illinois Junior Angus Association and the NJAA have changed me a great deal," Rebecca Hurst says. "I have strengthened my leadership, organizational and communication skills and have become a more outgoing person." Rebecca has served as a director, secretary and, in 2009, as president of the Illinois Junior Angus Association. She was an Ebonette and then the Illinois Angus Queen in 2007 and received scholarships from the Angus Foundation and the Illinois Angus Auxiliary.

The daughter of Richard and Dianna Hurst, Dorsey, Ill., Rebecca is a crop science major with an agribusiness concentration and an animal science minor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. At the University of Illinois, Rebecca is active in Alpha Zeta Agricultural Fraternity, 4-H House and Hoof and Horn. She currently serves as the Hoof and Horn ExplorACES chairperson.

"After completion of a bachelor's degree, I would like to have a career in agricultural sales," Rebecca says. "I would also like to continue to raise Angus cattle."

Courtney Jentz

"The reason that I joined the Angus



Courtney Jentz

Association was to show cattle," Courtney Jentz says. "Then I was opened up to all the other opportunities that are offered: leadership conferences, scholarships, various contests, and time to spend

with family and friends."

In addition to serving as vice show chair, show chair, and, in 2008, as president of

the Wisconsin Junior Angus Association, Courtney has served as the Wisconsin Angus Princess and Queen.

An animal science major at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Courtney intends to pursue a career in the embryo transfer (ET) field, combining that interest with an interest in sexed semen and the positive influence she thinks it will have on the cattle business.

The daughter of Gregory and Kim Jentz, Fennimore, Wis., says the people she has met will be the greatest thing she will take away from her involvement in the NJAA. "The friendships seem more like a family, and the connections are endless," Courtney says. "Whatever my future holds I know I will always have Angus cattle in my pastures to take me back to the memories this Association has given me."

Austin John

The son of Leonard and Debra John,



Austin John

Schertz, Texas, Austin says he has learned that the hard work and self-discipline required to show cattle is worth it when he can travel with his family to a show and see his friends from different parts of the country.

"I have been to many states during my junior career. I have traveled from New York to California; I have even been outside the states to Canada," Austin says. "And most of the people I have met I have learned a great deal from." Austin has enjoyed success in the showing at the county, state and national levels.

As a business administration student at Lakeview Community College, Austin's professional goal is to use his degree to get a management position in the restaurant, bar or entertainment business. He also intends to raise one or two heifers a year to show.

"None of this would be possible if it wasn't for the Angus business and the opportunities, skills and the people I have

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met throughout my junior career,” Austin says.

Shane Kinne

“My years in the National Junior Angus Association have been an irreplaceable experience,” Shane Kinne, Eagleville, Mo., says. “I would hope and encourage all young Angus and cattle enthusiasts to take advantage of what the NJAA has to offer.”



Shane Kinne

Shane has served as treasurer of the Missouri Junior Angus Association; was one of the recipients of an Angus Foundation scholarship; and has shown at the county, state and national levels.

The son of Keith and Shelly Kinne is a student at the University of Missouri (MU) majoring in agriculture education. While at MU he has been a committee member of the MU Agriculture Society, MU Block and Bridle, and has served on the board of the College of Ag Student Development.

Shane has strived to improve the genetics of his Angus herd through an aggressive artificial insemination (AI) program, and has also been an active member of FFA, the Missouri Junior Cattlemen, and the Collegiate Farm Bureau.

“I plan to stay actively involved in production agriculture by continuing to develop my own herd of Angus cattle and to stay actively involved with the American Angus Association,” Shane says.

Billy Lewis

“It is hard to believe my career as a junior Angus member is nearly complete,”



Billy Lewis

Billy Lewis, Walstonburg, N.C., says. Billy, the son of John and Miriam Lewis, has been active in the NJAA and the North Carolina Junior Angus Association for the past 11 years, building

the leadership skills he says are serving as a foundation for his career and building personal relationships in the industry that will last a lifetime.

Billy has earned a two-year degree from

North Carolina State University in livestock and poultry management/agriculture business, and is now taking distance courses to earn a degree in agriculture education from North Carolina Agriculture and Technical University.

He has served as treasurer, vice president and president of the North Carolina Junior Angus Association, received Angus Auxiliary and state scholarships and presently works for the North Carolina Department of Agriculture as a livestock marketing technician, helping producers market their cattle under source verification.

“I feel my life’s calling is working with cattle producers in marketing their product,” Billy says. “My goal is to have a cow-calf operation of my own and work for the [U.S.] Department of Agriculture.”

David Lundgren

“Raising Angus is a relatively new experience for my family,” says David Lundgren, son of Sandy and David Lundgren, Ottawa, Kan. He reports that they bought their first Angus, a cow-calf pair and a heifer, in 2002. Shortly after the purchase, he joined the Kansas Junior Angus Association and the NJAA and learned about the many activities the junior department offers.

Since the NJAS was in Kansas City, Mo., that year, he attended to see what it was all about. David has been successful at the NJAS since then, placing first in team sales and first with his team in the Cook-Off in 2008.

Before becoming a business management student at Oral Roberts University, David had been in charge of the day-to-day chores, hay production, some breeding decisions, calving and herd health in his family’s operation.

“After I get my degree, my goal is to go full-time into raising Angus cattle, and producing high-quality hay and forage,” David says. “I love to be able to look out in the morning and see all of the cows and their calves out in the pasture.”

Jordan Paulsrud

Jordan has been a member of the NJAA since 1998. She has served as historian, second vice president and secretary of the Iowa Junior Angus Association. Jordan was an Angus Princess in 2008 and was a mentor at the NJAS in 2007. She is the daughter of Bob and Teresa Paulsrud of Danbury, Iowa.

“I always knew I loved showing cattle; however, I never understood the depth of this passion until, fresh out of high school, I moved to England,” Jordan says. “During

that year I spent away from home, I decided that somehow, some way, I would be



Jordan Paulsrud

involved in Angus cattle for the rest of my life.”

The next fall, Jordan enrolled at Iowa State University as an animal science major. She says she can envision herself working for the junior

association or for a large Angus operation after graduation.

“We have had some outstanding junior advisors in our state association, and I believe that is an excellent way to give back to a program that has given so much to me,” she says. “I would love to serve my state’s association in that capacity sometime in the future.”

Kelsey Pfeiffer

Kelsey, the son of Jerry and Ada Pfeiffer, Orlando, Okla., says he is proud to be a part of an industry and an association that has taught him so much. He says he is constantly utilizing new grazing techniques for the improvement of the family’s pasture grazing, and he has used AI to make genetic strides for



Kelsey Pfeiffer

his herd and has participated in AHIR® to monitor birth, weaning, yearling weights, milking expected progeny differences (EPDs) and carcass EPDs.

Kelsey says he is thankful for the many friends he has gotten to know, “even if it did involve dressing up for CAB Cook-Off contests, or studying for that famous quiz bowl.”

An agricultural science student at Connors State College who plans to attend Oklahoma State University in fall 2009, Kelsey has served as vice president and president of the Oklahoma Junior Angus Association and has been successful in the showing and in showmanship competitions at the county, state and national levels.

“I am a fifth-generation Angus producer,” Kelsey says, “and I hope to be able to help the next generation enjoy this lifestyle and industry that has helped me so much.”

Kelsi Retallick

Kelsi is the daughter of Kevin and Keri Retallick, Glen Haven, Wis., and an animal science major at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Kelsi says the best part of her junior career has been the many opportunities she has had and all the friends she has made.

She served as president of the Wisconsin Junior Angus Association in 2007, and took part in the Mentoring Program at the NJAS in 2008.

"I've met so many great people," Kelsi says. "And my junior years have been a nice stepping-stone to becoming a member of the Association."

She received a Foundation scholarship and a Wisconsin Auxiliary scholarship, took first place in the 2008 NJAA photo contest senior landscape division and received Honorable Mention in the 2008 National Junior Angus Showmanship Competition.

"I hope to enhance my herd and have my own farm some day," Kelsi says. "And I am so grateful for the many opportunities I have had throughout my junior years."

Wesley Ruby

A graduate of Hawkeye Community College with an ag business degree, Wesley plans to find a job in the agronomy side of the ag business. After being active in agronomy while working at a feed and supply store as part of his college work experience, he found that he really enjoyed it.

As for this being his last year of junior eligibility, "It seems like only the other day I was headed to my first Angus show," says the son of Mike and Sandy Ruby, Greene, Iowa.

Wesley has served as historian, second vice president and president of the Iowa Junior Angus Association and says that one of the ways being a part of the NJAA has helped him is with self confidence.

"I know that before I attended my first leadership conference I was really shy and got nervous around people I didn't know," Wesley says. "Now, I will go out of my way to talk to someone."

In addition to a career in agronomy, Wesley says he'll be looking for a farm so he can have a personal herd of Angus cattle.

Kyleigh Santee

"Since entering the business world of agriculture sales, it has become clear to me that being a member of the Junior Angus Association for the past 12 years has helped me prepare for my future," says Kyleigh Santee, daughter of Barry and Karen Santee, Langdon, Kan.

Kyleigh has competed successfully in regional, state and national shows, and was named one of the 15 finalists in the 2008 National Junior Showmanship Competition.

She served as first vice president and president of the Kansas Junior Angus Association, and as the Kansas Angus Queen. Kyleigh was the first-place Kansas Angus Auxiliary and American Angus Auxiliary scholarship winner in 2006, and a Foundation scholarship winner in 2007.

As a sales representative for Tractor Supply Co., Kyleigh considers it personally rewarding when local farmers and 4-H families consult her for advice about their cattle's well-being, the latest in showmanship techniques or the latest products for their farm or ranch.

"As I continue in the ag business world and beef industry, my main goal is to help get as many juniors involved as possible," she says. "I also want to start a family and raise them up around this industry."

Jara Settles

Jara Settles, Hoskins, Neb., plans to attend Kansas State University in fall 2009 after graduating from Butler Community College in May. The daughter of Joan and Jerome



Jara Settles

Settles is majoring in agricultural business with law and international options.

"I would like to go on to law school," she says, "with the hope of being involved in the legislation that affects farmers

and ranchers of the United States on a daily basis."

Jara has served as vice president of the Nebraska Junior Angus Association for the last two years, was a 2007 scholarship winner, a member of the first-place teams in the 2008 Cook-Off contest and quiz bowl and won individual first-place honors in the photography and poster contests.

"Responsibility seems to be a quality lost in the tumultuous times in which we live; however, the youth of agriculture have the great fortune to possess this rare trait," Jara says. "The responsibility I have learned from the care of my livestock has made me a better person, and a better citizen of the world."

Jennifer Ann Smith

The daughter of Bob and Jeannie Smith, Elysian Fields, Texas, says her nine years

as an NJAA member "have flown by." In addition to allowing her to make friends across the country, she says the NJAA has "taught me that when you want something, you must work for it. Hard work, dedication and determination are three attributes I believe the NJAA helped me attain."

She is a student at Texas A&M University majoring in agriculture business. She has served as vice president and president of the Texas Junior Angus Association and as Miss Texas Angus. Jennifer Ann says she has enjoyed competing in the team sales and Cook-Off competitions at the NJAS since 2004. She is the 2008 winner of the National Junior Angus Showmanship competition.

"As I look into the future, I hope I can share my moments from the NJAA with other young Angus enthusiasts," Jennifer Ann says. "I want to one day have the opportunity to give back to the NJAA for all it has given me."

Jaclyn Upperman

Jaclyn Upperman, Chambersburg, Pa., admits to having some regrets about her NJAA career. Though she had been a member since 1998, it wasn't until she purchased her first Angus show heifer in



Jaclyn Upperman

2002 that she started becoming more involved.

"I wish I would have started earlier in participating in more events and contests," she says, "I feel it would have allowed me to gain more knowledge."

During the past seven years, Jaclyn has been the president of the Pennsylvania Junior Angus Association, the Pennsylvania Angus Queen, assisted with the 2007 Pennsylvania Eastern Regional Junior Angus Show, and helped bring the National Junior Angus Show to Pennsylvania in 2011.

A student at Shenandoah University, she plans to earn a nursing degree with an emphasis on endocrinology and diabetes management.

"I would like to eventually move west and start a family," she says, "I would raise Angus cattle and club calves and be able to merchandise my cattle and have my children show. As for now, I am going to stay involved by following my sister's and other junior members' Angus careers."

