

A Family Tradition

Showmanship is in the blood of the 2013 NJAS champion showman.

Story & photos by **Lynsey Meharg**, intern

“I want you to take a moment, take a deep breath and just take it all in, because this is one of those special moments that only happens once in a lifetime,” judge Lacey Robinson said, directing her words toward the 15 finalists in the 2013 National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest. “I think you really just have to take that in and appreciate it, because your whole NJAA career goes by so quickly!”

For Paige Wallace, this year’s champion showman, it takes more than a moment to reflect on her active career in the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA).

Serving the American Angus Association as Miss American Angus, being elected as National Junior Angus Board leadership director and receiving her Gold Award are all honors Wallace has achieved. However, ending her junior show career by being

named champion showman at the 2013 NJAS has been at the very top of her bucket list since the beginning.

“Showmanship is something I’ve always loved. It’s always just been natural,” Wallace says, noting that showing cattle is a family activity.

Ernie and Tammy Wallace, Paige’s parents, both grew up on cattle operations and continued the tradition after their marriage. Remaining self-employed on the family farm, the Wallaces built a herd of registered-Angus cattle. As a result, Paige had the opportunity to grow up on a 150-cow operation near Stotts City, Mo., where her family raises show cattle in addition to holding a production sale each year.

“Showing cattle is our livelihood,” Paige says. “That’s how we market our cattle.” That makes the ability to show an animal to its best advantage an important skill.

Beginning her show career at age 8, Paige has had a great support system. Both Ernie and Tammy have judged national shows, including the NJAS and the national showmanship contest, setting a great example for Paige. Showmanship is something the entire Wallace family enjoys, including Paige’s younger brother, Samuel, who was named champion showman at the National Junior Simmental Show in 2011.

“Kids, they mirror their parents,” Paige says. “My parents are excellent at showmanship.” That may be why both Ernie and Tammy have been asked to judge the NJAS showmanship contest in the past. Practicing showmanship with her parents when she was younger taught Paige to love the art form because, unlike exhibiting her heifers in breeding classes, she could be in control of the end result.

Earning the title

Having served as a junior co-chair for the 2013 NJAS, winning showmanship in her home state of Missouri was emotional for Wallace, who remembers details of a previous NJAS in Kansas City. Able to recall



► Paige Wallace worked hard to be conscious of even the tiny details during the final round of the 2013 National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest.

Role models

Growing up in a family with a strong agriculture background paved the way for Paige to be influenced by her mother and grandmothers.

“My grandmother still rinses cattle every day!” Paige says.

Tammy Wallace, Paige’s mother, set an example by being the first female judge to ever sort the National Western Stock Show Angus Bull Sale and by judging the 2007 National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest in Tulsa, Okla.

“It’s been a tradition in our family to have women that work on the farm, and I’ve had influential women in my family that have been involved in the industry.” Paige says. “That makes me feel like I can do anything — as a girl — in the agriculture industry.”

what the show backdrop looked like and how it felt to be in the ring, it’s no wonder that winning the contest at the 2013 NJAS was a goal of hers.

“When we’re showing, it’s out of our control,” Wallace says, “but it’s the ultimate deal to be told you’re the best in the Association in your last year.”

Paige admits that during the last several years, staying current on showmanship has been difficult since her collegiate activities and involvement in the junior board have increased. Practicing with her mother on the finer details of showmanship in the weeks leading up to NJAS helped to refresh her “rusty skills.” She credits learning her showmanship skills at an early age for her showmanship knowledge coming back so quickly once the competition began.

“You always wonder if she’s ready, but when she hits the lights, she turns on another gear,” says Ernie of his daughter.

After watching the show for several days, Paige was ready to get in the ring. Wearing black jeans and boots, a collared white shirt and a show harness carrying the bright red showmanship number card, she joined representatives of other state junior associations in the ring for a preliminary round to begin the competition. Both the preliminary and final rounds were judged by Robinson, Olsburg, Kan.; Jason Hoffman, Thedford, Neb.; and Randy White, Waukomis, Okla.

“So many factors go into winning the showmanship contest, especially since you show someone else’s heifer,” Wallace says. After being selected as one of the



► Growing up showing Angus cattle, Wallace dreamed of winning the National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest. Winning the contest in her home state made the win that much more meaningful.

top 15 showmen, Wallace participated in the final round of showmanship on the last day of NJAS. Once she reached the final round, she worked hard to be conscious of everything she did so that she could have her name called in the top 5.

“I was nervous! As junior members, we’re only given one shot in the showmanship contest, so a lot rides on those few minutes you’re in the ring,” Wallace says. Knowing that remaining calm would help her actions appear more smooth and effortless, Wallace relaxed and exhibited her heifer to the best of her ability. Ultimately, her hard work paid off, and Wallace’s name was added to an exclusive list of past National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest winners.

“This title means a lot of different things to me. It means my hard work has paid off. It also means I’ve completed my junior career. Finally, it means I’ve been honored with a title few can hold,” Wallace says. “I’ve been showing cattle my entire life, so I feel truly honored that I can be added to the

“Showmanship is something I’ve always loved. It’s always just been natural.”
— Paige Wallace



► After being named the 2013 champion showman, Wallace receives her Revere Bowl from Cortney Hill-Dukehart Cates, American Angus Auxiliary president.

Showing checklist

Amie Stertzbach, Louisville, Ohio, one of the three judges of the 2012 National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest, says she teaches kids a full-circle checklist to keep in mind when setting up a calf in the showing:

- Straighten up the head and neck;
- Set the front feet;
- Set the hind legs;
- Make sure the tail is tucked; and
- Loin down, if needed.

Always be aware of where the judge is, and keep these steps in mind whenever you or the calf moves, she says. The checklist moves through the calf’s body in a circle, and it should stay on the top of the showman’s mind as they go through the ring. This checklist is a constant responsibility.

— Kasey Brown, *Angus Journal*

list of champion showmen at the National Junior Angus Show.”

Wallace offered some advice for younger showmen looking to improve their skills.

“I think it’s important for juniors to go to those showmanship clinics, or even just go to the showing and pick out a few people you can watch and learn from,” she says. “I oftentimes see juniors obtain bad habits that they may not be aware of. Don’t

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Aberdeen in twenty-thirteen

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be afraid to ask questions or take advice from older, more experienced cattlemen and women.”

An upcoming senior at Oklahoma State University, Wallace hopes to continue her involvement in the American Angus Association through her term as a junior board member and after. Paige has worked in a variety of internships, including photographing several shows for Pearl Pics, learning broadcasting through an internship with *Oklahoma Horizons* and as

an anchor for *The Angus Report*, as well as serving as the summer communications intern for the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA) in Washington, D.C. After obtaining her bachelor’s degree in agricultural communications, Wallace plans to pursue a career that combines either communications, broadcasting or marketing with her passion for the agriculture industry.

Paige also plans to maintain a small cattle operation so that her children will one day be involved in the Angus breed, as well.

Accomplishing so much at such a young age is impressive in itself; however, she plans to continue that success as she moves forward in life with the firm foundation her family has built for her. Having been shaped by the agricultural industry and the people involved in it, Wallace says, “There’s no better way to teach kids responsibility and hard work than surrounding them with good people.”

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