

60 Years of Silver

The oldest national junior award in existence celebrates its 60th anniversary.

Story & photo by **Kasey Brown**, associate editor

As Sydney Schnoor and Ryan Callahan made their way to the award podium at the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) to accept the Silver Pitcher Award, they became a part of a legacy now 60 years in the making. A prestigious prize awarded to the boy and girl earning the most points through placings in the cattle show, the Silver Pitcher is the longest-existing national award presented to juniors.

Anne Patton Schubert, American Angus Auxiliary past president, explains that it was originally given by the American Angus Auxiliary (first as a silver bowl, which evolved to a silver pitcher) to the girl with the highest-placing steer at the International Live Stock Show in Chicago, Ill., in 1953.

The Auxiliary was formed in 1952, says Anne Lampe, past president, so the Auxiliary wasted no time starting the award program.

With the closing of the Stock Show in Chicago, in 1975 and 1976 the award was presented at the North American International Livestock Exhibition (NAILE) in Louisville, Ky., where it was based more on outstanding heifers than steers, says Patton Schubert.

In 1977 the award was presented at the NJAS, where it has been presented ever since. Starting in 1993, an award was also presented to the highest-placing boy.

"I don't know why it would be awarded anywhere but the junior show with how popular the National Junior Angus Show is now. It's the biggest junior show of the year," she adds.

The award was easy to calculate in the beginning, because fewer cattle were exhibited. The award is based on a points system now to account for larger showstrings. It's not just about the numbers, but they do help keep track as shows have gotten bigger,

Patton Schubert explains. Exhibitors with smaller showstrings still have a chance if the cattle do well enough. There is never a tiebreaker, though, so sometimes there are more than two pitchers awarded.

The best is the best, she explains. "This award honors excellence in the showing."

Annie Ruyle-Chaffin, chairwoman of the Auxiliary Silver Pitcher Committee, says the award can't be calculated until the very last slap of the heifer show. It can come down to the difference between being grand champion vs. a division winner.

"This award goes along with the

history of the Auxiliary and everything it does," she says. "The Auxiliary is always growing, and the fact that this award has been kept this long makes it really prestigious."

To celebrate its 60th anniversary, the *Angus Journal* followed up with a few of its past recipients.

Validation

Coming from a family that always showed cattle and a time when agriculture wasn't an accepted vocation for girls, Sheri (Coulter) Spader won the Silver Pitcher in 1968. She was a third-generation showman, and says her family never celebrated Thanksgiving at home. She laughs and explains that they were always at the Chicago International Live Stock Show until the show moved to the NAILE in Louisville, Ky. They always had Thanksgiving dinner at different restaurants, including the Stockyards Inn.

In 1968, she showed several heifers and a steer named Shenandoah. The name's meaning was twofold. As a young girl, it was her job to look up pedigrees in the old books, which sparked her interest in the heritage of her cattle and of her family. Her ancestors are from Shenandoah. Plus, that was during a

transition from short and stocky to a longer-bodied animal. Her steer was long-bodied, so she wanted a long name to go with him.

Shenandoah had done well at many other shows that year, but she was still pleasantly surprised when she was awarded the Silver Pitcher. Since Spader won, she was required to stay for the banquet, which was the social event of the year. Since her family hadn't planned to attend the banquet, they had already gone home. She had to catch a ride with a family friend back to Illinois State University, where she was taking classes.

She says, "When something wonderful like that happens to you, it just enriches your passion for Angus."

She and her sister were enrolled in the boys' 4-H club, of which her dad was the leader, because the girls' club didn't have beef projects. Her dad, who had shown for Timberline Farms and the Central Illinois Angus Association as a youth, also was a big advocate of the public speaking contests. Spader notes that there was a considerably smaller percentage of female showmen — she could count her girlfriends at shows on one hand.

When she enrolled in her classes at college, she wanted to take agriculture classes. She had to switch advisors because her original advisor refused to approve her classes because he said there was no future for women in agriculture. She knew from experience and had faith that there was, and she was right.

She says that having the support of her "can do" parents and the success of her experience as a junior with the American Angus Association showed her that just because something hasn't been done before doesn't mean that it can't be done.

Spader says she is pleased to see young people take an active role in leadership in agriculture, and to see all of the youth development and skill-building activities. Her involvement with Angus cattle instilled a passion, and her cattle herd financed her college education. Education was important to her, she says, because she came from a family of educators and continued the legacy. Winning the Silver Pitcher and her involvement in the Association as a junior member were a springboard for her future success.

Turning a hobby into a business

Holly (Gamble) Meier won the Silver Pitcher in 1998. She says it was the first year



Past Silver Pitcher award winners

1953	Joyce Kemp, Iowa	1982	Lisa Hawkins, Michigan	2001	Emily Pohlman, Nebraska
1954	Janice Hullinger, Iowa	1983	Janna Nelson, Idaho		Wesley Womack, Kentucky
1955	Nancy Turner, Ill.	1984	Susan Patton, Indiana	2002	Callie Smith, Tennessee
1956	Janice Hullinger, Iowa	1985	Amy Ostrom, Georgia		Kyle Conley, Missouri
1957	Bonnie Fassett, Illinois	1986	Susan Patton, Indiana	2003	Katrina Womack, Kentucky
1958	Karen Vorhees, Illinois	1987	Amy Ostrom, Georgia		Kristopher Lynn, Kentucky
1959	Laurel Muggee, Iowa	1988	Stephanie Nelson, Idaho	2004	Katy Satrie, Texas
1960	Marlene Wiseman, Iowa	1989	Susan Patton, Indiana		Preston Pollard, Oklahoma
1961	Nancy Brunzman, Iowa	1990	Stephanie Nelson, Idaho		Drew Byergo, Missouri
	Shirley Early, Canada	1991	Stephanie Nelson, Idaho	2005	Emily Pohlman, Nebraska
1962	Karen Spitzer, Illinois	1992	Beth Patton, Indiana		Garrett Blanchard, California
1963	Ellen Lilienthal, Iowa	1993	Beth Patton, Indiana	2006	Katy Satrie, Texas
1964	Janet Perring, Illinois		Ty Krebs, Nebraska		Kade Patton, Indiana
1965	Miriam Hullinger, Missouri	1994	Anne Davis, Kentucky	2007	Callie Smith, Tennessee
1966	Lenora Hilbert, Iowa		Ty Krebs, Nebraska		Garrett Blanchard, California
1967	Marlene Wiseman, Iowa	1995	Anne Davis, Kentucky	2008	Katy Satrie, Texas
	Anita Bulfer, Iowa		Wesley Womack, Kentucky		Garrett Blanchard, California
1968	Sheri Coulter, Illinois	1996	Jamie Beck, Missouri	2009	Katy Satrie, Texas
1969	Elizabeth Barnhardt, Louisiana		Wesley Womack, Kentucky		Garrett Blanchard, California
1970	Susan Lansman, Iowa	1997	Beth Patton, Indiana	2010	Katy Satrie, Texas
1971	Jean Wasson, Iowa		Wesley Womack, Kentucky		Garrett Blanchard, California
1972	Kathy King, Iowa	1998	Holly Gamble, Tennessee	2011	Katy Satrie, Texas
1973	Peggy Hanneman, Iowa		Jessica Sawyer, Nebraska		Kade Patton, Indiana
1974	Sue Carnahan, Iowa		Deanna Bloom, Indiana	2012	Katy Satrie, Texas
1975	Sonya Boggs, New York		Wesley Womack, Kentucky		Bryce Fitzgerald, Pennsylvania
1976	Sonya Boggs, New York	1999	Kami Krebs, Nebraska		Kade Patton, Indiana
1977	Sonya Boggs, New York		Wesley Womack, Kentucky	2013	Sydney Schnoor, California
1978	Dorla Cates, Illinois	2000	Kami Krebs, Nebraska		Ryan Callahan, Oklahoma
1979	Laura Haas, Illinois		Kyle Conley, Missouri		
1980	Stephanie Nelson, Idaho		Wesley Womack, Kentucky		
1981	Stacia Ellis, Indiana				

she exhibited a class winner at NJAS. That year, she had three class winners and a second. Champion Hill Lady 703 put her operation on the map, she says, and launched her career.

“Many people get wrapped up in winning, but the best parts of the NJAA (National Junior Angus Association) are the memories of good times and the friendships made,” Meier says, adding that her fondest memories are of time spent with her dad and the friends she made.

Once she graduated from high school, she says, she and her dad started investing more into their registered cattle. Her husband, Lydell Meier, helped turn the hobby operation of 50 registered cows into a full-time business with 250 head with commercial cattle, too. Almost everything they show now is bred-and-owned (B&O), and they have gained a successful reputation in the showing.

Many of the families they sell cattle to become close like family, she says. When she was showing, Bruce and Amie Stertzbach were like second parents to her, and now she enjoys the opportunity to be the mentor.

She and Lydell are strong advocates for education and are both involved in Stock Show University workshops. Holly says she often puts on showmanship clinics because showmanship is so important, no matter the quality of your calf. Knowing how to evaluate your calf and accentuate its strengths is a skill that great showmen must have.

Meier enjoys seeing her kids grow up and

work hard within the cattle industry. Her oldest, Andrew, 8, showed for the first time at The All-American Angus Breeders’ Futurity in peewee showmanship. His younger sisters, Annie, 7, and Alyssa, 6, will show soon. They each have some cows in their names so they can show in the B&O show when they are old enough.

She says there are many things that are easy to take for granted in the show industry, but a thank-you to parents, grandparents, 4-H leaders and extension agents goes a long way. She enjoys the show industry because a lot of small operations can keep the lifestyle around, regardless of size of operation.

Maintaining the prestige

Wesley Womack, winner in 1995-2001, capitalized on the honors to market his herd, naming his operation’s spring sale the Silver Pitcher Sale.

“At that point in time, winning the Silver Pitcher meant a lot more to my dad than me, but now that I have a son, I understand where my dad was coming from,” says Womack. “I would love to see my son win the Silver Pitcher one day. Now, looking back, I view it as a symbol of accomplishment for all the hard work and time my family and our employees put into breeding, calving, halter-breaking and preparing cattle for the showing.

“Today I consider it a great achievement winning the Silver Pitcher,” he continues, “because I know how much hard work and

time it took to make it to the showing, let alone all the homework and behind-the-scenes work it takes to make it to the NJAS.”

He says he named the sale the Silver Pitcher Sale because people recognize his or the farm’s name even if they’ve never met because of his reputation with the Silver Pitcher award. A marketing suggestion from Jeremy Haag, using the Silver Pitcher award as an advertisement for the sale helped sell cattle, because it proved that they raise quality Angus cattle.

Many winners of the Silver Pitcher award are still involved with the Angus industry. Patton Schubert says she enjoys following family and farm lines within the list of honorees. For instance, Janice Hullinger and Miriam Hullinger, winners in 1956 and 1964, respectively, are sisters. Looking at the list in the sidebar, you’ll notice many siblings, aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews.

Even for those winners who have chosen other careers, the skills they learned through showing Angus cattle — hard work, determination, perseverance, critical thinking — make them marketable in other job markets.

The American Angus Auxiliary made a tradition of honoring excellence in the showing for 60 years, and the benefit to the recipients long outlasts the years in the ring as an NJAA member.

