

Career Change

New director of junior activities has opportunity to give back to NJAA.

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

Those who show cattle know the passion that is involved. There has to be a drive to get up early to rinse calves every day, to train and brush hair for hours on end, and to haul cattle and tack for many miles to attend a show.

Once you get to the show, that's when the magic happens. The camaraderie, with exhibitors and with your calves, excites you. The career-development events prepare you for the future. Little did Jaclyn Upperman know that the magic and career development

in her participation in the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) was enough to change her career path.

Joining the Angus Association

The Chambersburg, Pa., native originally went to school for nursing at Shenandoah University in Winchester, Va., and graduated with her bachelor of science in nursing. However, her time with the NJAA and on the National Junior Angus Board (NJAB) made her realize that her passion was in agriculture and influencing youth. She wanted to give back to the experience from which she learned so much. She says since she became more involved with the NJAA experience much later in her showing career, she hadn't had enough time to fully explore the opportunities. She now has the opportunity to do so in her new position as director of junior activities for the American Angus Association.

Upperman grew up showing Angus cattle with her family in 4-H for many years. She attended a few junior Angus shows in 2005-2006, but her first National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) was in 2007 in Tulsa, Okla. From then on, she was hooked and jumped into the NJAA with both feet.

She was the president of her state junior Angus association in 2007 and served as a

junior chairman of the decorating committee for the Eastern Regional that year in Pennsylvania. This helped her get to know adult association members and many of the volunteers for the event.

In 2008, she was part of the team that vied for the NJAS to be in Pennsylvania, and they won the bid for the 2011 NJAS, themed "Let Freedom Ring." She served as junior co-chair for the show and says she gained quite a lot of experience organizing shows from behind the scenes through that event.



► **Above:** As director of junior activities, Jaclyn Upperman will serve as advisor to the junior board. Here she converses with Kelli Retallick.

► **Right:** Upperman organizes the junior board candidates before they give their speeches at the Candidate/Delegate Dinner during the 2013 NJAS in Kansas City, Mo.



She was elected to the NJAB in 2009 at the NJAS in Perry, Ga., and served as the membership director her second year. Upperman says she got to know the contests in-and-out as membership director, and she also contributed much to the Raising the Bar conferences. Her favorite aspect, though, was interacting with juniors.

“I got to know a lot of the kids by working with them through character-building and leadership activities. That definitely benefitted me in preparing for this position,” she explains.

While she was in college, she interned with Penn State Cooperative Extension in Franklin County, Pa., which turned into a full-time job after college as 4-H program assistant when she decided she wanted to stay in agriculture. She gained experience with junior members through that position and challenged herself by creating a 4-H robotics team.

She then accepted a position with the American Chianina Association (ACA), in which she was editor of the *American Chianina Journal* and director of activities and junior activities. She gained a lot of experience with shows, as she was in charge of the ACA national show in Louisville (her first show with the organization), Denver and Fort Worth to name a few, plus junior activities. She completed the National Junior Heifer Show in Grand Island, Neb., just three weeks before the NJAS.

Bill Bowman, president of Angus Genetics Inc. (AGI) and COO for the American Angus Association, says that Upperman’s experience with the NJAA at such a high level and her experience from her many responsibilities at the ACA set her apart from other applicants. “The experience Jaelyn has with directing youth and leadership programs, and with the planning and execution of shows and related events, make her a great asset to the Angus team.”

Ambitions

Upperman is certainly excited to be in charge of junior activities, but admits, “I’m nervous, because I’ve always held the National Junior Angus Association to such a high standard; obviously, everybody does. I have such a high standard to live up to.”

She’s excited to give back to the junior program that has made an impact in her life, and she wants to help prepare them through skill-building activities and offer programs that will benefit juniors.

She says that, as a junior, her favorite



PHOTO BY KATIE GAZDA

► From left, Jaelyn Upperman, Katrina Frey and Kate Livingston, junior co-chairs of the 2011 NJAS, presented a C.J. Brown painting to the Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex in appreciation of its continual support of the show over the years.

activity was attending the Leaders Engaged in Angus Development (LEAD) conference, but she is excited for shows.

“You meet the highly active juniors at LEAD and at junior nationals, but at some of

the other shows, you get to know some of the kids who don’t participate in those events,” she explains. “That gives you the opportunity to try to get them more involved.”



Historical milestones of the junior program

- 1951 — A special junior membership was approved to encourage youth participation in the American Angus Association.
- 1956 — The first state junior Angus association was formed in Missouri under the guidance of Earl Rogers, Ed Stout and Lyle Haring. The first officer team consisted of Eddie Sydenstricker, president; Ronnie Rogers, vice president; Fred Blades, secretary; Elizabeth (Moore) Coon, treasurer; and Al Ripperger, representative to the senior board.
- 1956 — The Junior Activities Department was formed and Val Brungardt was hired as the first full-time director of junior activities.
- 1957 — Dean Hurlbut succeeded Brungardt as director of junior activities.
- 1969 — Jay Penick was hired as assistant director of junior activities.
- 1973 — Hurlbut was promoted to director of activities and Penick was promoted to director of junior activities.
- 1977 — As a cost-saving measure, the director of junior activities position was eliminated along with five other staff positions.
- 1978 — The junior program was revived and Jerry Lipsey was hired as director.
- 1980 — The first heifer, donated by A.F. “Frankie” Flint of New Mexico, was auctioned at the National Western to support junior activities.
- 1980 — The National Junior Angus Association was formed.
- 1982 — Brian McCulloh succeeded Lipsey as junior activities director.
- 1984 — Mark Wyble, one of the original NJAA board members, succeeded McCulloh.
- 1991 — James Fisher was named director of junior activities.
- 2008 — Robin Ruff succeeded Fisher.