

Leader to Leader

Long-time friend honors another by endowing a scholarship in his name.

by **Carrie Horsley**, Angus Foundation

Smiles are endless on the faces of Becky Tiedeman and son Jake as they discuss the memories of Becky's father, Jim Baldrige. While sitting in the home of Bob and Becky Tiedeman in North Platte, Neb., you are surrounded by the history of the family and soon realize the impact Jim had — both on his family and on friends in the industry.

Starting somewhere

Born on a livestock and grain farm in northeast Missouri, Jim took his first job off the farm at Bonnie Acres Farm, working for the Conover family, says Becky. "That is where Dad found his interest in purebred cattle."

He tried school for one semester, but ran out of money and needed to find a job, she says. He worked for the *Corn Belt Daily* in Omaha, Neb., as a ringman, and then for a short period of time worked at the *Hereford World*. Jim then began working for the *Angus Journal* as an Angus fieldman.

"In all of his travels he was always looking for the next greatest bull," Becky says, noting that his territory included western Canada. There, in Alberta, he and Howard Hillman found one — a bull they nicknamed Great Northern. Officially Blacklock McHenry 13Y, Great Northern won grand champion bull at the Chicago International Live Stock Exposition in 1969.

"Dad subsequently sold one-third interest in Great Northern to Leon Rubin for \$35,000," Becky says. "That is what allowed him to go out on his own auctioneering, which is what he always wanted to do."

Jim and his family moved to North Platte, Neb., in 1963, and the family has been there ever since.

Leader

Jim spent most of his life giving to those around him. Whether it was buying a calf while auctioneering a sale, purchasing the Angus Foundation

Heifer Package or simply doing what he loved, he was always willing to give back, Becky says.

"Dad loved kids, and he said kids were the greatest investment you could make in your future," Becky says.

Jim purchased the very first Angus Foundation Heifer Package in 1980 for \$6,000 in Denver, Colo.

"Not only did he do it one year, but he did it the next," says Becky, explaining that he paid \$6,600 for the heifer package in 1981.

Jim is not the only one in the family to step up and support the Angus Foundation Heifer Package.

"We have always tried to rally and help support the Foundation heifer," says Jake Tiedeman, grandson.

Whether by pushing a heifer to bring a certain amount, getting a group together to buy the heifer, or even helping get the heifer ready for the sale, supporting the sale of the Foundation Heifer Package is something the family is always willing to do.

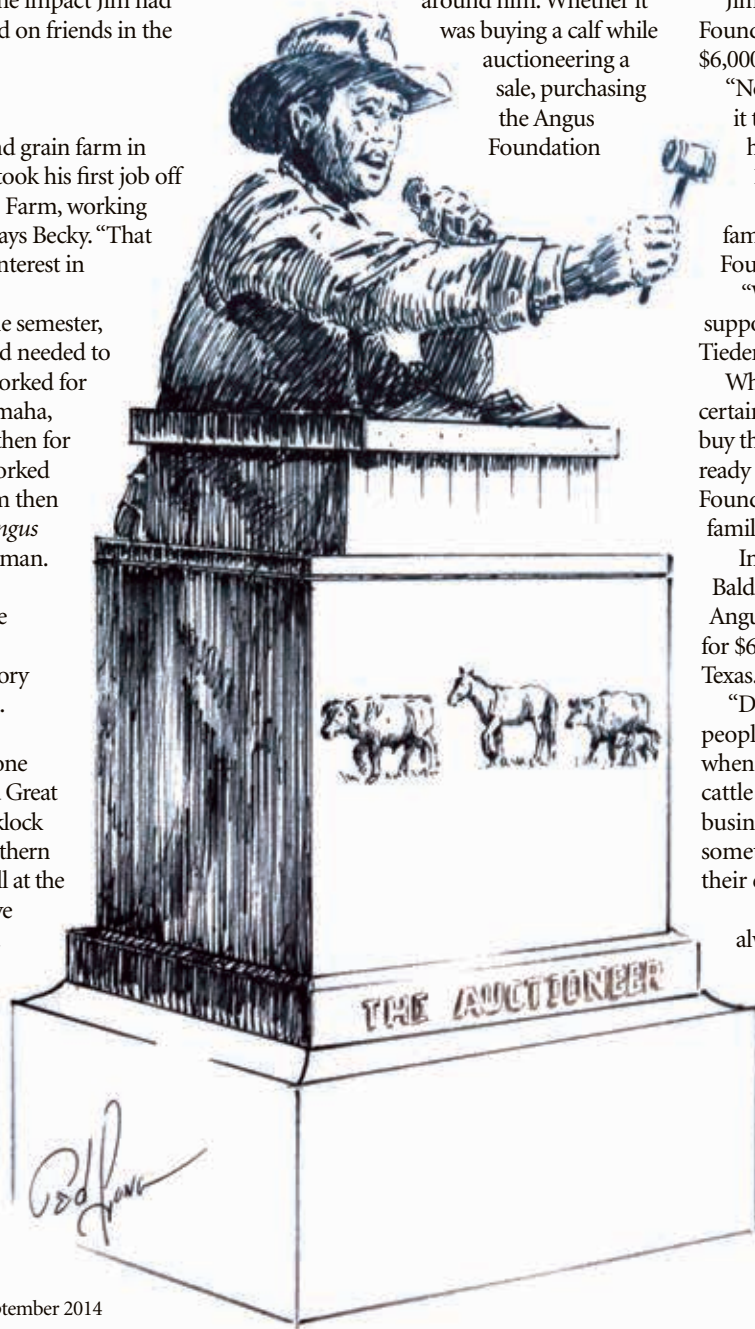
In 2008, Jim's sons, Jud and Jeff Baldrige, donated a heifer to headline the Angus Foundation Heifer Package. She sold for \$60,000 to MJB Ranch, Weatherford, Texas.

"Dad had a lot of good friends and people who would give him a hand up when he was trying to get started in the cattle business and the auctioneering business," Becky says. "He felt like this was something he could do to help kids out in their earlier stages of life."

Jake says his grandfather would always try to pay back the good deeds he was offered, and he did so by making an investment in the next generation.

If friends were to describe Jim, Becky says, "I would like to think they would say he was fun-loving and charismatic. He loved being an auctioneer and merchandising people's product for them."

"I'd like to think he was pretty



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darn good at it, too,” Becky says. “I think most people would concur.”

There are many stories and an endless number of laughs, but this is about a friendship that developed into something extremely special for two families.

Impact on a friend

“It was sometime during the ’70s,” says Bill Werner of Werner Angus, Cordova, Ill., recalling the date he and Jim first met.

Bill says they had many memorable times together, but one night in particular was spent talking, joking and laughing while drinking scotch and eating steak.

“It was a night to remember,” Werner says. Jim had invited Bill and his wife, Betty, into his home.

Werner says one thing Baldrige taught him about life was to not take yourself too seriously.

When it came to Angus cattle, Werner says

Jim would say, “Don’t chase fads, and do your own thing.”

There were a lot of things that came to mind when thinking about Jim’s best qualities, but Werner says, “he loved to have fun, and above all, he was always positive.”

Outstanding Leader Award

Recently, Bill and Betty donated \$50,000 to the Angus Foundation to establish a permanent endowment fund that provides a \$2,500 scholarship to the recipient of the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) Outstanding Leadership Award, in memory of Jim Baldrige.

“Betty and I have always wanted to support youth, and especially the juniors in the American Angus Association,” Werner says.

When deciding how to honor Jim, Werner says their reasons for choosing the Outstanding Leadership Award were “twofold.”

“One, we thought it best represented what Jim would have liked; and two, because, in

most cases, the winner should be able to make use of the scholarship right away,” Werner says.

The first-ever Jim Baldrige Outstanding Leadership Award was announced at the 2014 National Junior Angus Show in Indianapolis, Ind. Receiving the award this year was Brooke Harward from Richfield, N.C. (see page 118).

“We wanted to do this in honor of Jim Baldrige because of our friendship we had with Jim and now enjoy with Becky and Bob Tiedeman,” Werner says. “I will never forget what Jim did to help me get started in the Angus business and the respect and admiration I had for him.”

Becky Tiedeman says the family is proud, pleased and humbled by the Werners’ donation.

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Editor’s Note: *Carrie Horsley is the director of marketing and public relations for the Angus Foundation.*