

American Dream Supporters

The NJAA inducts contributors who have been supporting Angus American Dreams for many years into the Honorary Angus Foundation.

by *Christina Harp & Anne Trenholm*

Each year the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) selects outstanding individuals to join the Honorary Angus Foundation. Inductees are those who have shown significant dedication and support to juniors.

This year's award winners were presented at the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS), July 1-7 in Tulsa, Okla.

Julie McMahon French, Beaverton, Mich.; Henry and Nan Gardiner, Ashland, Kan.; and Bob Norton, Saint Joseph, Mo., were named this year's honorees.

NJAA honors McMahon French

Julie McMahon French, Beaverton, Mich., possesses a passionate spirit of outreach and dedication that enables those involved in the Angus industry to attain success at all levels.

French's loyalty to the Angus family is particularly evident in her commitment to provide new approaches to youth educational opportunities — a commitment she has maintained since serving on the NJAA's first Board of Directors from 1980-1982, notes American Angus Association Director of Junior Activities James Fisher.

"Julie serves as a catalyst for youth programs. She possesses a wealth of ideas and a selfless ability to empower others

to transition those ideas into numerous successful projects that help youth become more involved," Fisher says.

As American Angus Association Executive Vice President John Crouch notes, French's method for creating opportunities is filled with an abundance of creativity and energy.

"Julie possesses an innovative, out-of-the-box thought process," Crouch says. "Her concepts are representative of a new generation, and they provide a refreshing approach toward dealing with an ever-changing, very dynamic industry."

Her innovation has been the driving factor behind several new fundraising endeavors that she has helped to enthusiastically lead. These endeavors include "That Old Black Magic" and "The Magic of the Vine," the first two fundraising galas and auctions for the Angus Foundation. The galas and auctions generated funds toward educational initiatives such as Cattlemen's Boot Camps, scholarships for Angus youth and many other opportunities for Angus producers.

French's philanthropy is evident beyond fundraising initiatives. As an example, her most recent project, an NJAS Newsroom (see pg. 296), provided another opportunity for youth to develop and enhance their skills. The youth-run newspaper was published after the show and features articles, photography and other creative elements contributed by junior members.

In all of these projects, French's passion for Angus youth is evident. This passion is rooted in what Wynn Dalton Herbers, Gretna, Va., describes as French's strong, innate sense of family values. Herbers, who was a 15-year-old junior member at the Atlantic National in Timonium, Md., when she first met French, has had the opportunity to serve as a co-chair with her for past Angus Foundation galas and auctions. Herbers says she is appreciative of French's support for Angus youth, noting that her guidance serves as a great inspiration.

"I can't imagine my life being as fulfilling without Julie. Her mentorship has given me the opportunity to strengthen my skills, and her friendship has provided increased confidence," Herbers says. "Julie has made me a stronger person."

Herbers adds that she has not been the

only member of the Angus family to benefit from French's altruism.

"Julie works just as hard for junior members as she does for her own family, and if she can help a junior member, she will," Herbers explains.

The Angus industry is extremely lucky to have French's insight and support. As Crouch notes, "Julie is a highly energetic, very enthusiastic supporter of youth programs and youth activities. She has a tremendous passion for building the Angus Foundation into a viable organization that supports youth activities, education and research."

French has been able to selflessly share her talents to create successful projects that provide opportunities for members of the Angus industry. As many would agree, her dedication serves as an invaluable asset to the breed and Angus youth in particular. Because of French's creative leadership and energy, the Angus breed is sure to remain strong for years to come.

— by *Anne Trenholm*

Gardiniers honored for lifelong support of Angus breed

Henry and Nan Gardiner, Ashland, Kan., have a lifelong commitment to the Angus breed and continue to contribute to the National Junior Angus Association's (NJAA's) success. From serving as role models to young NJAA members to being early adopters of new technologies, the Gardiniers have shown their belief in the Angus breed.

"Their work ethic, integrity and strong family structure serve as goals for all of us — young or old — to strive toward," says Matt Perrier, Dalebanks Angus, Eureka, Kan.

For their dedication, Henry and Nan were inducted into the Honorary Angus Foundation at the 2007 NJAS.

The Gardiniers have always been supportive of youth in agriculture, Perrier says. They have donated their time and treasures and serve as role models to many NJAA members, including several of their grandchildren who are active in showing cattle and participating in NJAS contests.

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 274



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In addition to their generosity, the Gardiners were among the first to recognize the value of tools provided by the American Angus Association, such as artificial insemination (AI) and embryo transfer (ET), and put them to extensive use in their large-scale operation.

Recognizing the value of genetics and passing on information to others is equally as important to the Gardiners.

“Henry is a great teacher. He is always willing to share his knowledge about the industry freely,” says Don Laughlin, American Angus Association regional manager.

Serving on the American Angus Association Breed Improvement Committee and Board of Directors, Henry contributed to numerous research projects to evaluate performance and increase the production of exceptional Angus seedstock.

A list of accomplishments — including honors as the Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) Commercial Producer of the Year and Seedstock Producer of the Year, Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) Commitment to Excellence Award winner, the National Cattlemen’s Foundation (NCF) Beef Industry Vision Award winner, and Kansas Cowboy Hall of Fame inductee — stands proof of the Gardiners’ dedication to the breed.

The Gardiners have been involved with the Angus breed for more than 50 years. Their leadership and support continues to affect the NJAA, as well as the beef industry.

— by Christina Harp

Norton honored for contributions to NJAA and breed

A genuine interest in securing developmental opportunities for breeders, along with extensive financial support and a commitment to the success of the Angus industry has made Bob Norton, Saint Joseph, Mo., a strong partner of the Angus breed.

Norton’s commitment to the success of Angus is exhibited in many ways. He has had several leadership positions in both the meat packing and animal nutrition segments of the industry, including his role as a current member and past chairman of the Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) Board.

Norton, who began his career in the meat industry in 1975 with Dugdale Packing Co., Saint Joseph, Mo., has served as chief operating officer (COO) of Dubuque Packing Co., and he is the past president and chief executive officer (CEO) of CAB-licensed Beef America Inc. Currently, he serves as president of Biozyme Inc., Saint Joseph, Mo. His leadership there has led to a partnership between Biozyme and the Angus Foundation, where a portion of Biozyme’s VitaFerm® sales made to Angus breeders will be reinvested in the breed as Angus Foundation donations.

Norton uses his success in these segments of the industry to unselfishly pursue philanthropic efforts that create opportunities for all who are involved with Angus.

“Bob has been a pioneer in the field of giving to the Angus Foundation and the NJAA. Both his actions and his attitude have



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been great examples for others to follow,” Gray says.

Norton’s willingness to give back is rooted in his acknowledgment of the importance of relationships, a genuine commitment to sustaining the industry and a strong belief in using his resources to assist others.

Angus Foundation President Milford Jenkins thankfully acknowledges these aspects of Norton’s contributions as a great benefit to the Angus Foundation.

“Both Bob and his wife, Lisa, embody the spirit of philanthropy that allows the Angus Foundation to advance its goals of education, youth and research,” Jenkins says, adding that although Norton did not grow up in the Angus family, his selfless contribution of “time, treasure and talents” has certainly made him an invaluable member of this family.

As further example of Norton’s volunteer service and passion for the breed, Jenkins cites Norton’s involvement as a member of the Foundation’s Campaign Leadership Cabinet, which oversees Vision of Value: Campaign for Angus.

“We are grateful for Bob’s leadership to this ambitious \$11 million fundraising campaign,” Jenkins says.

While Norton’s philanthropy results in significant contributions that support breeders and the initiatives of the Angus Foundation, his support of youth is particularly important, as he continually makes it a point to contribute to youth beyond financial means, Fisher notes.

“Bob has a strong desire to see junior Angus members succeed. He possesses a genuine interest in supporting youth, which is evidenced by his presence at junior programs and events,” Fisher says.

Gray agrees, adding, “Bob realizes the importance of youth and providing the essential resources for them to develop into good citizens. He has been extremely generous in trying to provide those resources to the youth of the Angus family.”

In all, Angus producers are fortunate to have Norton’s dedicated partnership and support. As Crouch remarks, “Bob Norton’s roots are deeply entrenched in the cattle industry. He is an extremely knowledgeable individual. His charismatic leadership skills and innovative ideas have paved the way for the implementation of many new ideas and positive changes, not only for the Angus industry, but for the entire beef industry as well.”

— by Anne Trenholm

