

Sarah Rodriguez: AHA's Friendly Voice

by Lindsay Gruber

As a little girl visiting her grandfather's cattle farm, Sarah Rodriguez never imagined that she would eventually work for the American Hereford Association (AHA.) In May Sarah was recognized for 50 years of service to the AHA.

At the age of 17, Sarah — along with a group of friends — responded to a high school bulletin board posting and applied for a position at the AHA. Originally, Sarah worked in the steno pool department as a typist but eventually transferred to the records department. During the early years, Sarah was also a relief switchboard operator. Today, Sarah's sole responsibility is to be the switchboard operator and receptionist.

Some of Sarah's favorite memories of her employment at the AHA involve the National FFA Convention (formerly held in Kansas City) and the American Royal.

During the National FFA Convention, Sarah served as a tour guide. Along with members of the records department, Sarah mingled with visitors to the AHA booth at the American Royal. She enjoyed speaking with cattle breeders from across the country as well as townfolk who came to see the sights at the Royal. Possibly her most unique memory is from



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the 1960s; Sarah and other AHA ladies would parade the "10 best head" of Herefords around the ring at the American Royal.

During Sarah's 50 years, the AHA has seen many changes. From approximately 150 to the current 25, there has been a large shift in staff numbers. Additionally, Sarah notes that technology has changed a great deal — from typewriters to computers.

Remaining unchanged though, is Sarah's favorite part of working at the AHA: the people. She says, "It's all about the breeders — a commitment I enjoy daily." This is reflected in Sarah's demeanor, a "big smile and friendly face," notes Mary Ann Hackleman, a 56-year employee of the AHA and one of Sarah's longtime coworkers.

AHA Executive Vice President Craig Huffhines, says, "Sarah has been a wonderful personality, who has provided a friendly and fresh face for the Association. She remembers breeders' voices, their names and members of families — a trait that truly gives the Association a personal touch."

Sarah believes she received good fortune on her first day of employment at the AHA, for she has enjoyed her job the last 50 years. In her opinion, she was destined to work at the Association. And with no reason to leave, Sarah has never looked for another job. Currently, she has no plans to retire.

"It is rare to find people who are dedicated and choose to spend their entire career at one place. Sarah is, and always will be, a member of the Hereford family," says Huffhines.

Thank you, Sarah, for your service and dedication to the AHA. **HW**