

# The Young and the Dedicated

*Three young Hereford enthusiasts give back.*

by *Katrina Huffstutler*

These days, students are being pulled many different directions — sports, academic clubs, college prep courses, stock shows — the list goes on. But amongst all the busyness and chaos, many choose to give back, serving in leadership roles and volunteering in their communities and beyond.

As they serve, these exceptional young people are not only helping others but learning to better help themselves. These are the stories of three such individuals who all have roots in the Hereford breed.

## Rossie Blinson North Carolina

Third-generation Hereford breeder Rossie Blinson knew she wanted to wear the maroon jacket since she attended her first junior national in Tunica, Miss. And just a few short years later, that dream came true. She even worked her way up



*“I was put here to promote beef.”*

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to chairman of the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) board, a job that might be called a family tradition, considering her dad served in the same role on the National Junior Polled Hereford Council, back when the horned and polled associations were split.

But that was just the beginning for Rossie, now a senior agriculture business major at North Carolina State University, who firmly believes she was “put here to promote beef.”

Once her time on the NJHA board was up, she went on to serve as a North Carolina Beef Ambassador and eventually was selected as a 2012 National Beef Ambassador.

She says, though very different, both experiences were great opportunities for her.

“With the junior board, I was able to experience leadership and teamwork within a breed association. I was working with a lot of people I already knew



Rossie Blinson, a third-generation Hereford breeder, has served as chairman of the NJHA board, as a national beef ambassador and most recently as NCBA’s public policy intern.

who shared my interests and background,” she says. “But as a beef ambassador, I was working with people with lots of different backgrounds and our program was geared toward consumers. Instead of shows, we were going to places like the Boston Marathon and the New York State Fair.”

She says her time as a beef ambassador really broadened her perspective and gave her a taste for what consumers wanted — and wanted to know.

“By being [in that position] able to listen to the consumers’



Rossie Blinson, center, pictured here with her beef ambassador team, says her time in that role really broadened her perspective and gave her a taste for what consumers wanted to know about beef.

concerns I could actually see firsthand what they were thinking about, what they like about beef, what they don't like about beef and some misconceptions that were out there," Rossie says.

The various lessons learned and connections made in both leadership roles helped prepare the passionate beef advocate for her most recent role, one she was sad to see ending at the time of our interview. From January through May, Rossie worked as a National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) public policy intern in Washington, D.C. While there, she got the chance to help with the Cattle Industry Convention and the legislative conference where cattlemen represented their states on the Hill, as well as day-to-day meetings with members of Congress and their staffers. She also completed a lot of research for NCBA and earned valuable life experience.

"Just being from the country and living in the city is a big change," she says. "And good, I think, for everybody to experience at least once."

She says all of her experiences, though different and beneficial in their own ways, have all had one thing in common — they've

afforded her the opportunity to meet a lot of people she would have never met otherwise.

"Through the junior board, I got to meet producers from all over the nation," she says. "And then through my last two roles I've been able to meet all different kinds of people who work in the industry. Maybe not Hereford people and maybe not even cattle producers, but people who are involved in the greater beef industry. I'm making tons of connections all across the U.S. which is great as I prepare to go into the working world."

### Tyler Schultz Kansas

The showing is fun and all, but that's not where Tyler Schultz's passion lies. The sixth-generation Hereford breeder says he'd choose a day at the farm over a day at the show anytime. But that doesn't mean he didn't get a



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— Tyler Schultz

whole lot out of being an NJHA member participating in the Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE) and the Kansas Junior Hereford Show — while giving a lot back.

Tyler and his family own and manage Sandhill Farms near Haviland, Kan. "We are more performance-based," Tyler says. "Our cattle are more broody type cattle. Really I'm not involved in the showing world to win; I'm just there to meet people and to learn."

While there, he's also lent a hand to help, assisting with quiz bowls and other events. He knows he's been helped in the process, too.

"I guess I always tried to take advice from other people," Tyler explains, "and whenever I hear them saying, 'Make connections, make connections,' even if I don't understand why, I've tried to do that. I've taken that to heart and I'm starting to learn now how it's important to be connected with people."

He credits his dad for opening that door by "always being near a whole bunch of people."

Tyler says the connections he's made have taught him a lot — especially in regard to learning what's important to them in their cattle versus knowing what's worked for him — and he knows that knowledge will help him when he returns to the operation after college.

But serving isn't all about learning and experience and connections, and no one knows that better than Tyler. At just 15,

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he gave back to his community in a way many adults never get to.

In 2007 when the powerful EF-5 tornado hit Greensburg, Kan., it hit Tyler's community, too — in fact — just about 1.5 miles from his home. The teen wasted no time in pitching in to help those who'd lost everything.

"I drove around the next day with a man that I'd never met before and we helped people clean up," Tyler says. "I'm happy to give up my time and help somebody out if they need it more than I do."

But that wasn't the end of it, unfortunately. The next day, similar tornadoes hit the same area about half a mile closer to the Schultz's place. This time, it was really personal as one of those storms took the family's church.

Tyler, who says he's always enjoyed "tinkering with technology" also created a video



Tyler Schultz helps at his family's sale. He says he'd prefer a day on the farm to a day in the showing.

to document the tornado's damage. He screened it at church, gave copies to those affected and posted it to YouTube for a permanent record of what the community survived.

He says the strong Christian values he was raised with, along with being a part of such a tight-knit community, inspire him to help. And when those who need it are local, it's even more of a no-brainer.

"In high school, I had to write an essay for a scholarship on what person has influenced you most in your life," Tyler says. "I wrote it about my community as a unit. It's a really great community. Some people decide they don't want to raise their kids where they grew up, but it's exactly what I want to do."

### Chandler Mulvaney

Alabama

For 2013 National Beef Ambassador Chandler Mulvaney, there's no doubt where his inspiration to lead came from — his older sister, Katlin.

"[Until I was old enough,] I just tagged along and got to watch her compete in junior Hereford and 4-H events," he says. "She really paved the path for me. That was really an

encouragement and helped me to focus on what I wanted to do. It allowed me to set goals and ask myself 'Where do I see myself in 10 or 15 years?'"

Once he was old enough to join in, he followed in her footsteps. And once she was elected to the NJHA board, it really sank in.

"I was like, 'Wow! I could be doing things like this.'"

And, in time, he was.

"I now can pay it forward or — pay it back — where kids can view me as someone who's inspiring. I think it's definitely a cyclical process," he says.

Last summer, Chandler was approached by his state's cattle women group, encouraging him to consider applying to be a beef ambassador. He said "yes," and took the process very seriously.

"I told them, 'I really want to make sure that I'm preparing not only for the National Beef Ambassador Program but making sure that I have the knowledge and the experience necessary to eventually lead in the future,'" he says.

"Just last year realized that I needed to be more knowledgeable about the beef community outside of the showing. I started looking around and I said, 'What do I know about traceability or the Beef Checkoff or different cattlemen's organizations and their role within the beef community?'"

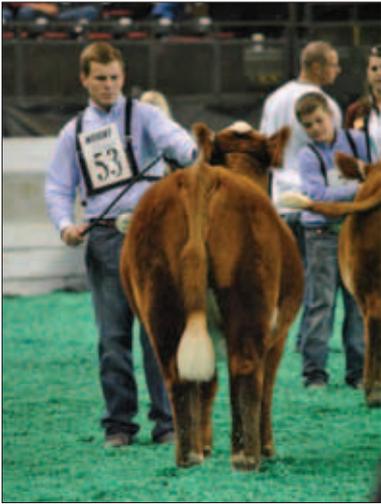
He started to realize there's a much bigger picture to consider — a world that's about a lot more than showing cattle. He wanted to be educated and prepared when possibilities present themselves to share with others.

So, he studied. And studied. And studied some more.

"I studied every day over the summer," he says. "It was a big challenge on my part, but I knew



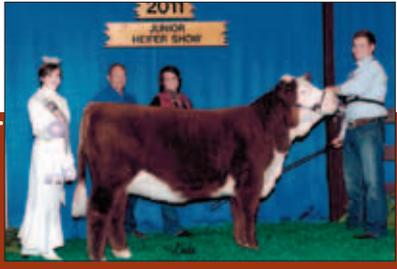
Tyler Schultz exhibits his heifer at the 2010 Junior National Hereford Expo in Indianapolis.



Though he tagged along, too young to participate, for years, Chandler Mulvaney eventually got the chance to follow in big sister Katlin's footsteps in the Hereford ring.

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— Chandler Mulvaney



consumer. That’s what makes a difference in the long run. Just equipping yourself and getting to know the producers around you is what I would have to say.”

**‘Don’t be afraid’**

All of these junior members agree — their experiences have been invaluable. They also are the first to encourage the next group of kids to step up to do the same, even if the idea scares them.

“I have to say the one thing that I’ve learned through this experience is don’t be afraid,” Chandler says. “Our advisor always tells us, ‘Don’t be afraid to change the world, no matter what it is.’ Whether you’re 10 years old, you’re 15; you’re in college like me. You’re always bombarded with all these negative messages, ‘You can’t do this, and you can’t do that.’ I’d really like to contradict that and say, ‘Don’t be afraid to change the world. Getting yourself out there and making sure you’re continually improving yourself is what makes a difference.’ **HW**

what it would take, because this is a very competitive competition. We had 22 senior contestants last year in the National Beef Ambassador contest, vying for five prestigious spots.”

So he prepared every single day. He even went through media training and visited with beef industry leaders to make sure he had a firm grasp on the issues and how to best communicate about them.

By the time he arrived in Sacramento, he was ready to go in all four categories of the contest: issues response, consumer demonstration, media interview and classroom presentation.

He says that through all of his experiences, his main takeaway is this: we are all one big beef family.

“Realizing everyone is in it together and we have these connections is so

valuable,” Chandler says. “Don’t be afraid to contact someone and ask their perspective and talk to them about their beef story. Those are the kind of personal examples we need to be sharing every day when we talk to an activist group or just an everyday



National Beef Ambassadors Erin Morrison, Chandler Mulvaney and Katie Stroud cheer for the athletes as they cross the finish line at the 2013 Boston Marathon. Luckily the ambassadors were not at the site of the bombing.