

Memories Last a Lifetime

Retired junior board members reminisce.

by **Tosha Powell**

Smells, sounds, tastes and thoughts. Memories are built instantaneously. Just imagine the memories that are made in three years. Four retiring National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) directors have a long list of memories they share. As they move forward to pursue their goals, however, they will never forget the memories.

Cassie Bacon

Cassie Bacon, Prairie Grove, Ark., is a ninth generation Hereford

breeder, dating back to her mother's family's herd in Germany. Starting her show career at the age of 4, this 20 year old has a lifetime of memories in the NJHA.

"My family's love for Hereford cattle is deeply rooted with my father showing at junior nationals many years ago," Bacon says.

She credits her parents, Craig and Debbie Bacon, for her success in life and the showing.

"My family will always be my biggest support system," Bacon says. "My parents have a strong belief in the ag and beef industry and have been there to teach me everything along the way. Since I've been away to college, my brother and sister

have had to step up and take my spot on the farm."

While running for the junior board, Bacon recalls her family devoting time to help her achieve her goal. She says, "My family helped me run for the board three years ago with the most support any family could give to their child, and I will never forget my little brother and sister running around Tunica handing out my fliers."

Her favorite memories of being a director are helping junior members. Bacon's love for the organization shines through her actions as a role model. Program for Reaching Individuals Determined to Excel (PRIDE) Convention was the perfect opportunity for her to connect with junior members.

"I get such joy knowing that any junior I have helped will continue to grow with the association," she says. "PRIDE Convention is a fulfilled week of Hereford fellowship, leadership growth and industry knowledge. As directors, we hope that after attending PRIDE, junior members will be stronger leaders and will continue to be a voice for our association. The little moments of assisting a junior will always add up to be the most memorable moment on the junior board."

Bacon is a sophomore at Oklahoma State University (OSU) double majoring in agricultural communications and animal science with a food industry option. Upon graduation, she plans to continue her family's tradition of raising Hereford cattle, while working for the cattle industry in the field of public relations.

Mark Sullivan

At the age of 22, Mark Sullivan is a successful registered client service associate at Smith Barney in Bellevue, Wash. He may now be



One of a junior board members' responsibilities includes setting up for JNHE contests and events. Here, Mark Sullivan helps a junior member prepare for the Hereford bowl.

a businessman with a 401k, but his heart belongs to the NJHA.

"I do portfolio analysis and offer financial planning at Smith Barney, but I still want to maintain a strong breeding program and have high involvement in the cattle industry," Sullivan says. "My time on the junior board and entrance into the workforce has shown me that the cattle industry is a passion of mine and I cannot see my future without participation in Hereford events."

The Sullivan family has been raising Hereford cattle for many years. Sullivan's older brothers started showing at a young age, which sparked Mark's interest.

"Since I started showing, the passion for everything in this industry from showing to breeding seems to increase more and more," Sullivan says. "This summer marked the 11th consecutive junior national I have been able to experience with my family."

Similar to Bacon's, Sullivan's success and gratitude to his parents will never cease. "My family deserves all the credit when it comes to me being where I am today," he says. "Mom and Dad have done many thankless tasks along the way, some of which I am sure I will never even be aware."

Sullivan also gives additional thanks to the support from a special sibling.

"My sister and I have been partners from the start in every aspect of my involvement with cattle," he says. "She has done a great deal to shape who I am today in relation to cattle and beyond."

Sullivan says that memories made through involvement in the



Retiring director Cassie Bacon looks to her elders for advice to continue Hereford strong.



Cassie Bacon, Prairie Grove, Ark.; Mark Sullivan, Chelais, Wash.; Catie Sims, Elgin, Okla.; and Chance Young, Springfield, Tenn.; receive their bronze Hereford statues after serving three years on the NJHA board.

NJHA start at the Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE).

"This year we started two new programs at JNHE — the mentoring program and Hereford grill-off," Sullivan says. "New memories can be made through being involved with these activities. The mentoring program was designed to facilitate new junior members participating for the first time at JNHE. They applied for an older member to show them around and to help them become familiar with the many activities available that week.

"The Great American Hereford Grill-off was new as well. Each state was invited to participate in this team activity. This contest helps promote beef and its benefits of a healthy diet — all while junior members are able to work on their public speaking and teamwork skills. As a director, it was exciting to see this new program in action," he says.

Sullivan credits his fellow board members for many of his memories as a director. "The people that I have shared my term with are what I will remember the most," Sullivan says. "They have made everything from working the showing to road trips turn into memories that will stick with me for a long time."

Sullivan graduated from the University of Washington with a bachelor of science in economics in 2006.

Catie Sims

The Sims family of Elgin, Okla., is a continuing success in the Hereford industry. Fourteen years in the showing with no intentions of giving up, Catie Sims, 20, continues her family's legacy. With both parents involved in Hereford shows and an older brother who served as president of the National Polled Hereford Council, she follows in their footsteps as president of the NJHA.

Sims will retire from the junior board this year, but this will not be her last Hereford event. She has two years left to show, and she will continue to watch her younger brother and two nephews show for years to come.

"My brother still has a few years left in the NJHA," she says. "And my oldest nephew exhibited in his first show this year in Denver. It doesn't look like the Sims family is going anywhere for a while."

Sims confesses that her family is a big tribute to her life in the NJHA.

"My family has a deep love for Hereford cattle and we like nothing better than to see the Hereford breed on top," she says. "Mom and Dad are always there when we need anything, and they always have great advice and guidance. I want them to know I could never repay them for the love and support they have given me along the way."

As many years as she has dedicated to the breed it is no wonder that she has so many good memories. Sims recalls the Hereford Youth Foundation of America (HYFA) Gala as one of her most memorable experiences.

"The most gratifying of all the events I have attended is the HYFA Gala," she says. "Helping raise money for the HYFA Capital Endowment Fund is such an important part of the junior organization. The fund is intentioned to help with the continuation of the JNHE and raising scholarship funds. I would not be where I am today without the NJHA, so it is good to see that it will be around for many years to come."

After graduating from OSU with a degree in nutritional sciences, Sims plans to attend nursing school at either the University of Oklahoma or the University of Central Oklahoma. Following that she will attend nurse practitioner school with a focus on pediatrics.

Chance Young

Chance Young is the 22-year-old son of Tony and Pam Young of Springville, Tenn. Although he was raised in the cattle industry, Young's involvement in the Hereford breed is because of some very close friends of the family. He says they sort of persuaded him into showing and he has been showing ever since.

After eight years in the NJHA, Young looks forward to the future



Junior board members have a passion to provide inspiration amongst Hereford youth. Here, Chance Young displays his passion during his retiring address.

and the things that are yet to come through this industry.

"I don't get to show anymore," Young says. "But, I have two younger brothers that will show. I probably will be involved in the industry for the long run."

Young encourages junior members to become involved in the industry and try new things. He says individuals shouldn't be afraid to get out of their comfort zones and shouldn't be afraid of change, both might do them some good.

When asked his favorite memory of his time spent on the junior board, Young finds it hard to choose just one.

"I don't know of just one memory that suits my time on board," he says. "Every time I meet with the other board members or every time I participate in a Hereford event a new memory is made. I find them all to be a favorite."

Young would like to give special thanks to Chris Stephens, American Hereford Association director of youth activities, for all the time they have spent together and the bond they have created. He also thanks his older brother, J.R., who has helped him in his Hereford adventure.

After graduating from Murray State University with a degree in animal science, Young plans to pursue a job in the cattle industry with possibilities in animal reproduction, while staying close to home to help his brothers show.

"I just take things as they come," Young says. "I'll stay around to help my brothers."

The 2007 JNHE marked these four retiring board members' last chance to create memories as directors; however, these four Hereford juniors say they will always remain close friends. Opportunities provided through the NJHA can not only give youth fun experiences with competition at various events but as these four retiring directors found out firsthand, life-long friendships and memories. **HW**



Retiring President Catie Sims gives an interview to the *Denver Post* used in their online photo essay from the 2007 JNHE. To see the essay visit www.denverpost.com/photoessays/ci_6354408.