



Retiring directors pictured (l to r) are: Hannah Wine, Kandi Knippa, Kimber Evans and Katlin Mulvaney.

In Their Words

Four retiring NJHA board members reminisce, look ahead and say thanks.

by Sara Gugelmeyer

The Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE) may be one of the most exciting weeks in a young Hereford enthusiast's summer, but for four retiring National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) board members, it is the bittersweet end to an era of leading the Hereford youth nation. These individuals took time to reflect and answer a few questions about how they got where they are today and what lies ahead. Their words are filled with inspiration and advice for younger members and thankfulness for those who helped lead them into adulthood. We thought their comments would be best expressed in each person's own words.

« HW »

How did you get started showing Herefords?

Kandi Knippa, Seguin, Texas, 2009-2010 chairman: Ranching has been in my family for generations, but I was first introduced to Herefords by my brother-in-law, Brent. He and my sister Katie were showing polled Herefords, so it seemed fitting that we would choose



Kandi

the same breed. Since I was only 8 years old, the gentle disposition and easy going attitude of the calves would be a perfect fit for a little girl with a giant bow in her hair.

Hannah Wine, Marshall, Va., 2009-2010 membership chairman: It all started at lunch after church one snowy Sunday afternoon in January 1993 when my parents asked me what I wanted for my birthday. I told them a baby cow, rather jokingly. A few weeks later when my fifth birthday came, I was surprised to find a Hereford cow and calf that had been purchased from Bob Kube in the front field with my ponies.

Kimber Evans, Fall River, Kan., 2009-2010 director: I was born into a family that used Hereford cattle as part of our commercial operation. As I grew up, my passion for the breed also grew, resulting in me showing Hereford cattle.

Katlin Mulvaney, Opelika, Ala., 2009-2010 vice chairman: I am the third generation Hereford breeder in my family. It wasn't until my fifth-grade year, living in Warrensburg, Mo., on my grandpa's farm that Hereford cattle become my passion.

One evening one of Grandpa's cows gave birth to twin heifer calves but immediately rejected one. Grandpa carried this 80 lb. calf all the way up to the barn. The next morning Grandpa had a heart attack as a result of straining himself saving the calf's life. While Grandpa was in the hospital recovering, I took care of all the chores with the help of my parents. The calf, Boopie, was registered, so I could show her. I had several show heifers before this, but Boopie was the heifer that stole my heart. She was ultimately the foundation female of my herd.

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Why and when did you decide to run for the NJHA board?

Knippa: From my first JNHE in 2000, I knew I wanted to be part of what made the association a success. I became serious about running at the 2004 Tunica JNHE. I had just been elected to the Texas state board of directors and knew if I remained on the right track I could one day be a part of something great. I actually planned on running the summer after my freshman year of college until one day after my high school graduation when Brent asked me why would I bother to wait if I knew it was what I wanted. So, I took a jump and ran fresh out of high school. Although I was the youngest candidate running that year, I soon realized that I was ready and that it was the right decision.

Evans: I decided to run for the junior board after serving as a delegate in Louisville in 2006. I had been contemplating the idea prior to then but made a definite decision at that point. I wanted to give back to an organization that has given so much to me and other youth in the Hereford industry along the way.



Kimber

Mulvaney: I attended my first PRIDE (People Reaching Individuals Determined to Excel) Convention in

2002 in Kansas City. Being a voting delegate allowed me to witness first-hand the caliber of the individuals running. Having the opportunity to attend PRIDE and meet so many great people ignited a passion inside me for the Hereford breed. Seeing the positive influence these 12 people had on my life at such a young age inspired me to run for the board. I knew having the privilege to serve as an NJHA director would be an honor to give back to the association.

Wine: After graduating from high school and spending the fall traveling to all the shows with my heifers, I began to think of all the board members I had come to know. I even remember meeting my very first board member as soon as we pulled into the fairgrounds in Billings, Mont., for my first junior national: Rex Peebles greeted us as though he'd known us for years. After Denver 2007 I tossed back and forth the idea of running for the board but was nervous that I came from too small of an operation with only 60 cows. In May 2007 Cassie Bacon sent me a Facebook message encouraging me to run for the board; it was her note that pushed me off the fence.

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What has being a board member taught you?

Knippa: The junior board has taught me many lessons through the years. I have learned not only from myself but from our advisors and my fellow board members, as well. I've learned that everyone has a different style of leadership, but when we work together and use each board member's strengths to the advantage of the association, the possibilities are endless. But most importantly, I have learned that if you have strong support and work well with others, you will accomplish much more than by yourself. Working together is the right direction for a successful association.

Evans: Hard work, communication, and dedication are just a few of the traits I have learned or improved upon while being a member of this

organization. It has also taught me that nothing worth doing or having comes easily and that when you choose to set your mind to something and work together, anything is possible.

Mulvaney: Being an NJHA board member has taught me countless life lessons. Some of the life lessons I've learned are: Don't change yourself to try and fit in with others. Be original. Take time to meet the first-year junior sitting by himself watching everyone play 3-on-3 basketball. Extend a helping hand to the junior struggling to lead her calf from the wash racks because the calf will not walk. These little acts of kindness may seem insignificant to you, but I can assure you they mean the world to them. Be the change you wish to see in the world.

Wine: Flexibility is the key to making life enjoyable. While I have learned to hope for the best but prepare for the worst, the junior board has taught me you will never know what is in store, but if you are willing to be flexible, you can handle just about anything.



Hannah

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What are your plans for the future?

Knippa: I will graduate from Texas A&M University next May with a degree in animal science. Following graduation, I plan to obtain my master's degree in agricultural communications with hopes of one day working for an association, particularly in the youth department. I will continue to build my Hereford herd, and I do not plan on being absent from the junior show circuit for long. My niece Brinley will be able to show in 2013. Brylen will start showing the next year, and I can't wait to watch them grow and mature in this association the way I have.

Evans: I am a recent graduate of Kansas State University and am

currently working as a commercial loan officer intern. I plan to continue working in the finance industry along with raising registered Hereford and Angus and commercial cattle with my family.

Mulvaney: Graduating from Auburn University in December and moving to Macon,

Ga., to work for the Georgia Cattlemen's Association has been such a learning experience. My passion for the Hereford breed and my Hereford family will never fade. As I transition into this new phase of my life, I want to remain active in the association. Adjusting to this new chapter is going to be exciting to see the growth of the breed, the increasing quality of our genetics and the future junior leaders come through the association. I look forward to the opportunity to continue giving back and serving the association for many years to come.



Katlin

Wine: After graduating from Virginia Tech University in December, I want to work for Virginia Cooperative Extension as a 4-H agent, as well as doing freelance photography work and always having Herefords on the side. While I plan on cutting down the size of my herd in the next year to focus on my career, I will always have a small herd of Herefords. Looking further down the road, I would like for Herefords to continue to the next generation of my family and for Longshot Polled Herefords to one day be recognized as a century breeder — 17 years down, 83 more to go!

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What advice would you give to other junior members?

Knippa: My advice for fellow junior members would not only be for them to take advantage of the opportunities in front of them but to just get out of your stalls and become active. But, at the end of the day, never forget the common thread that ties us all together: Herefords. Be an

active part of your cattle operation; help decide whom to breed your heifer to; pick out the calf you want to bring up to halter break out of the pasture; ask fellow Hereford breeders what helps to make their ranch a success. You will only learn more about the industry by being a part of it and learning from experience.

Evans: My advice to junior members of all ages is to always go after your dreams. Getting involved is always the first step, and hard work, while not always enjoyable, will pay off in the end. I leave you with one of my favorite quotes I have lived by over the years: “Adversity causes some to break, others to break records.”

Mulvaney: I think one of my life songs is “If Today Was Your Last Day” by Nickelback. I love this song because it reminds me if today was my last day, how would I act, how would I treat people, how would I invest my money, etc. Take each and every opportunity as a gift. It is yours to turn around and “regift” to someone and make his life a little easier or happier. Have courage to stand for what is right. Be the type of friend you would want to have.

Wine: I want to encourage all juniors to reflect on your involvement in the Hereford, beef and agriculture industries. You should be really proud of your Hereford involvement.

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Is there anyone you would like to thank?

Knippa: The words “thank you” never seem to be enough when I think about all that I have been blessed with. My biggest thanks go to my family, including my mom and dad; sister Katie and her husband, Brent; their girls Brinley and Brylen; and my sister Kimberly. Without Brent and Katie, I would not have a calf to my name, as they are the reason I have been able to show the cattle I do and build an operation to be proud of.

I would also like to thank the state of Texas, as each junior has been great to work with.

Chris Stephens and Amy Cowan were the best youth directors we could

have asked for. Amy has always been willing to give her everything for us to accomplish what needs to be done.

The junior board members I have served with helped to make me who I am today, and I have enjoyed every second. I especially thank Hannah, Katlin and Kimber. Together we have watched our association grow and our dreams become realities. To each of our advisors, thank you for providing us with the knowledge and wisdom and for helping us feel confident when making decisions for the NJHA.

Finally, thank you to each member of the NJHA and each Hereford breeder for allowing me to serve you for the past three years. Being your chairman this year has provided me with memories and experiences I will cherish forever.

Evans: First and foremost I would like to say thank you to my amazing family for all that you have done and continue to do to help me along the way. To my parents, you are the best anyone could ask for, and you have given me so many opportunities over the years to pursue my dreams. To my brother, Matt, thank you for all of your help and everything you do while I am on the road, off at school or carrying out my junior board duties. I could not have done it without your support. And to my sister-in-law, Jessica, thank you for being one of my biggest supporters and for allowing us to drag Matt and you across the country to various shows.

To Amy Cowan, Chris Stephens and all of our advisors, thank you for always being there with suggestions and assistance and for always guiding us, not only as directors but in life as well. I can never express enough my gratitude for your advice along the way.

Last but not least, I would like to thank the Acheson family for their continuing support. We have made many unforgettable memories over the past six years. I would also like to say thank you to everyone in the Kansas association for everything over the years, and send out a huge thank you to our advisors, Sue Rowland and Danny Davis, for your help and support along the way.

Mulvaney: There are not enough “thank yous” to express my heart-felt gratitude to everyone who has been a mentor and friend throughout my term. I’m not going to try to thank these special individuals specifically, because I know I would not name everyone I need to. Here is a thank you for taking the time to invest in me.

A few special thank yous are thank you to all of my fellow board members. I have loved serving with you and becoming lifelong friends. Thank you Dad, Mom and Chandler for your love and support. Thank you Chris Stephens and Amy Cowan for the countless hours you have spent developing my leadership skills. You both have been great to work with.

From my Alabama Hereford families to my Ohio Hereford families, it will not matter the state we live in for years to come, because it will be our friendships and Hereford ties that will last. You have all truly been blessings to me.

Wine: I need to thank my mom and dad, but it’s hard to even start. I thank them for giving up the entire idea of summer vacations, the all-of-a-sudden new truck buying when we realize the old clunker won’t make it on a 1,200 mile trip this summer, calling and reminding me to pack my blazer as I head out the door for the airport, taking care of all the animals as I head off to another show, but most of all I am thankful for their support and encouragement in all of my ventures.

I want to thank my fiancé Scott, who came to his first junior national in Denver, when I ran for the board and he hasn’t had a break since. I’m forever grateful for his long hours driving, taking care of cows while I’m away, ability to use a ratchet strap, and always supporting my decisions.

I also want to thank Chris Stephens, Amy Cowan and the current and past NJHA board members for being such a huge part of three of the greatest years of my life.

Finally, I want to thank all of the American Hereford Association staff for their support and commitment to the NJHA board. **HW**