



## Lessons Learned and Leadership Given

*This year's retiring directors have served the NJHA with passion and dedication.*

by **Bridget Beran**



Retiring board members (l to r): Keysto Stotz, Krissi McCurdy, Courtney Tribble and Shelby Rogers.

Each year four individuals who have led the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) for three years step down and pass on their maroon jackets. Krissi McCurdy, Chatsworth, Ga.; Shelby Rogers, Hamilton, Texas; Keysto Stotz, Skiatook, Okla.; and Courtney Tribble, Puyallup, Wash., finished their terms on the NJHA board of directors July 11 during the Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE) awards night.

"I'm really going to miss this group," says Amy Cowan, American Hereford Association (AHA) director of youth activities and foundation. "They've been a great group to work with. They've had a lot of creative ideas and they take their job seriously as board members and have truly been a pleasure to work with the last three years. They've left the NJHA board in a great place and positioned it to move forward to great things."

While their time on the NJHA board of directors may be done, their Hereford involvement is far from over. The lessons they learned throughout their service will carry them through into the "real world."

### **Krissi McCurdy**

The 21-year-old daughter of Donald and Kay McCurdy, Krissi followed in her brother Matt's footsteps, showing

Hereford cattle and running for the NJHA board of directors. Love for Hereford cattle is in her blood, and she says it was inevitable that she was going to step into the ring at least once.

"When I did, I fell in love," Krissi explains. "It was a great way to spend time with family and learn multiple life lessons throughout the years. I wouldn't trade all that for anything."

Since her election to the board in 2011, Krissi says she has learned that it's important to treat each person respectfully and to handle duties with a smile.

"Krissi has been a tremendous asset to the NJHA board," Amy says. "She has a big heart and really cares about representing not only her state of Georgia but the Southeast region."

A well-decorated junior, Krissi has served as president and secretary of the Georgia Junior Hereford Association. Throughout her 18 years as an NJHA member, Krissi has participated in 14 JNHEs, received the Golden Bull Achievement Award, been a state voting delegate twice and was named the outstanding state junior member in 2010.

"She is so good when it comes to working with the younger members. She's always reaching out to a younger

member and lending a helping hand," Amy explains.

Described by her fellow boardies as their "little Georgia peach," Krissi possesses a sweet disposition that kept her fellow board members upbeat. Shelby says their time on the board brought them together and she considers Krissi one of her best friends.

"Krissi is a little ball of sunshine," Keysto says.

Krissi began her collegiate career at Butler Community College, El Dorado, Kan., where she was a member of the livestock judging team and graduated with an agriculture degree. She currently attends Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw, Ga., where she is pursuing an elementary education degree.

"I want to teach at the elementary level and hopefully incorporate agriculture into their young lives," Krissi explains. "They are our future and need to know what is going on around them."

Krissi also plans to maintain a Hereford herd and to remain involved in the industry. She hopes one day her own children will share her love of Herefords.

### **Shelby Rogers**

Retiring as the leadership chair, Shelby says past junior board members, especially Heather Thomas-Ritner, were vital in encouraging her to run for the NJHA board of directors. She says serving on the board was a dream of hers and she encourages other juniors to never give up on their dreams.

"Shelby's been awesome when it comes to helping plan and get ready for the PRIDE (Program for Reaching Individuals Determined to Excel) Convention," Amy says. "She's a true leader and has a lot of energy and brings a lot of great ideas to the boardroom."

Shelby is the daughter of Keith and Cindy Rogers. This Texas native's leadership began within the Texas Junior Polled Hereford Association, which she has been a member of for 14 years. During those years, she served



as president, vice president, second vice president and director. Nationally, she has attended 13 JNHEs and eight PRIDE Conventions.

"I learned how to work well with others," Shelby says about her time on the board. "We all come from different areas and different backgrounds and must work together for the betterment of the breed."

Outside the showring, Shelby, at 20 years old, is a junior at Oklahoma State University, dual-majoring in agricultural communications and animal science. She says, upon graduation she hopes to work in livestock marketing and social media management for producers.

Shelby's big personality made her fun to be around for her fellow board members. Krissi says she doesn't think Shelby's ever met a stranger while Courtney praises Shelby's dedication to bettering the breed.

"Shelby is the peanut butter to my jelly. I couldn't do it without her. I've enjoyed spending my time on the board with her," Keysto says.

The owner of 55 registered Hereford cows, including two Dams of Distinction, Shelby got her start in Herefords because her mother had shown Hereford steers through 4-H when she was a child and wanted her children to have the same experience, so Shelby's father purchased her first heifer.

### Keysto Stotz

For this retiring NJHA chairman, his start with Herefords began because his father worked on a Hereford ranch. Keysto began exhibiting Herefords at the age of 7 and has now been an NJHA member for 13 years.

A former Junior Hereford Association of Oklahoma president, Keysto was instrumental in planning two PRIDE Conventions as well as revamping some of the JNHE contests such as Hereford Bowl and starting pre-peeewee showmanship.

"I wanted to serve my fellow breeders and learn more about Hereford cattle and people," Keysto says of his decision to run for the board. During his tenure

on the board, Keysto also served as the leadership chair.

"Keysto has been an awesome leader. I've enjoyed working with him as chairman of the board this last year," Amy says.

The 21-year-old says that he learned a lot about patience, organization and networking throughout his time on the board. Amy says these lessons helped Keysto to be a great director and chairman for the board while his ability to insert fun into any situation made him enjoyable to work with and his tireless dedication helped lead the NJHA in the right direction.

"Keysto definitely kept things entertaining. He's serious when he has to be but a lot of fun to work with," Amy adds. "He's good at getting the most out of his board and making them work hard. He's always asking what he can do to help and always kept the NJHA moving forward."

Nicknamed "DJ Sto," his fellow board members say he's the funniest member of the group. Courtney says Keysto is one of a kind and the guy to go to if you're having a bad day.

"Keysto and I have been friends for as long as I can remember. He's kind of been like my older brother on the board. He'll always crack jokes to make us laugh," Shelby says.

Keysto encourages juniors to take advantage of everything the Hereford junior program has to offer because of the benefits it will provide for life down the road. Keysto will be a senior this fall at the University of Tulsa, majoring in instrumental music education/pre-law. After graduation, he plans to attend graduate school and to continue to raise Herefords.

### Courtney Tribble

Courtney started her show career while she was still in diapers. Her big heart and dedication brought her to the board. The 23-year-old daughter of Rick Tribble and Denise Jagielo says she followed in her older sisters footsteps by entering the showring and being involved with the Washington State Junior Hereford Association (WSJHA).

"I can count on Courtney for anything. She's always jumped up and wanted to help, whether it be identifying photos at the backdrop in Reno or coming to Denver and helping us wherever we needed help," Amy says.

A leader from the beginning, Courtney served as president, treasurer, historian and director for WSJHA throughout her 15 years of membership before running for the NJHA board of directors.

"I wanted to be more involved and give back to the association that had given me so much growing up," Courtney says. "It is an opportunity that I could not pass up. It was one of the best decisions I have ever made."

Serving on a national board teaches directors a lot of lessons and this vice chairman was no exception.

"Over the last three years, I have grown as a person. Being a part of such an outstanding board has taught me that communication is very important in whatever we are doing," Courtney explains. "It has truly been the fastest three years of my life."

Courtney says she also learned how to build professional relationships along with getting to make connections and to have opportunities present themselves, even when she least expected them.

"I really admire her dedication to being a board member and her passion for leadership," Amy says.

From giving advice to ironing shirts, Courtney is described by her fellow board members as "caring and dependable."

"She's definitely the mother of the group. She takes care of us." Krissi says.

Shelby was a delegate when Courtney first ran for the board and says she always thought Courtney would be a great board member.

"Getting to serve on the board with her has been awesome. We traveled to 'The Harvest' and the World Hereford Conference together and we've become very close through that," Shelby says.

While she currently works at Risk Placement Services, Courtney says she intends to go back to school to finish her bachelor's degree.



### That magic moment

In 2011 these young leaders' lives were changed forever the moment they received their maroon jackets. While they expected that there would be a lot of work, they say that the number of friends and connections they've made has made the experiences special.

"It was really exciting and a dream come true," Shelby says. "This has been my dream since second grade. I was always looking up to the directors and I can't believe it's already over."

For all of these juniors, their jackets have a special meaning and receiving them gave them not only an important title but also an important purpose.

"It was emotional because I'd ran once already," Courtney says. "Just that people gave me the chance to actually serve on the board was amazing. These last three years have been a tremendous opportunity. To get my jacket from Rossie (Blinson), who did an outstanding job on the board herself, was just something special."

Krissi adds with a laugh, "I was completely overwhelmed by the whole experience plus getting the maroon jacket was kind of crazy, especially because it was about 15 sizes too big."

While the experience may have been only a short part of their lives, they agree that it has shaped them in many ways — from allowing them the opportunity to see the country to becoming confident leaders. They have the utmost respect for the positions they've held.

"It has meant the world to me. I'm so honored and humbled to have served on this board," Keysto says.

### Changes for the better

Throughout their time on the board, Krissi, Shelby, Keysto and Courtney say they have developed both personally and professionally. Serving on the NJHA board provided them the opportunity to travel across the nation and to network with producers and consumers alike.

"It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience. You get to do so much traveling; you get to go so many places and meet so many people in the industry. You learn so

much, on a business level and a personal level," Courtney says.

They all agree the board has given them a long list of industry connections as well as a plethora of friends.

"You instantly become like family with the people that are on the board with you," Shelby says.

Being on the board has changed these juniors, but they have worked to change the NJHA as well. The NJHA has seen many changes throughout the past three years, and several of those changes can be credited to the hard work of these four juniors. They understand that part of being on the board is always striving to better the association and to give juniors more opportunities to learn and to succeed.

"We always tried to do what was best for the membership," Keysto says.

The addition of the JNHE ambassador program and co-hosting PRIDE Convention with other junior breed associations to form the Faces of Leadership Convention were just a few of the changes that were led by this group of board members.

"We're always working to improve junior nationals and the contests for the kids," Courtney says.

They had a passion to not only serve the NJHA but to lead it into the future by making changes that would help develop the association as a whole, as well as to benefit individual members.

"That's why we get on the board. We want to improve the breed and our junior program," Krissi says.

### Memories made

A person can make a lot of memories in three years. From experiencing minor injuries at PRIDE to begging airport shuttle drivers for a late-night fast food run, Krissi, Shelby, Keysto and Courtney have had their share of humorous moments while on the board.

Right after being elected to the board, Courtney and Shelby traveled to California for the Hereford Youth Foundation of America (HYFA) fundraising event — "The Harvest." Shelby says that getting to mingle with the adult members and HYFA

supporters was a great experience. Later during their term, Shelby and Courtney also attended the World Hereford Conference in Canada.

"Going to the World Hereford Conference was a great experience. It was incredible meeting all the people who were there. I became friends with a kid from New Zealand and a girl from Finland," Shelby says.

Keysto cites meeting actor John C. Reilly while in Michigan for PRIDE as one of his favorite board memories. However, they all agree that it wasn't the big trips or special days that made their time on the board special but rather the times when they were all together.

"It was the little things that made it an amazing experience," Krissi says.

### Bittersweet goodbyes

As their time on the board came to a close, all of these retiring leaders agreed they had one word in mind: bittersweet. While they say they're looking forward to a more relaxed schedule and being able to spend time with their cattle at shows again, they all agree that their time on the NJHA board will be deeply missed.

"Life will be a lot more carefree but it's going to be different. I'm not going to be able to come to junior nationals and have something to do. It's changing my whole life," Krissi says.

For Krissi and Courtney, this year also marks their last year as juniors. However, while their junior careers may be over, they say they're determined to stay involved in the Hereford breed.

"It's been a great three years. It's been awesome and I'm sad it's over. But at the same time, we all have to move on and there's other things that I can still be a part of to be involved with the association," Courtney says.

Luckily for Keysto and Shelby, they have a year or two left in the NJHA. They say that while JNHE will be strange without their usually packed schedule, it will be nice to have some down time.

"We will just see where the path called life takes us," Courtney says. "One thing's for sure, we'll still be involved with Herefords." **HW**