

New NHW Leaders Selected

During the 2011 National Hereford Women (NHW) Annual Meeting in Kansas City Oct. 29, three ladies were selected as NHW directors.

Catie Sims

Catie Sims, Oklahoma City, was recently re-elected for a second term on the NHW board. Catie served on the NHW board last year to complete a resigning board member's term and is now serving her own term.

Catie grew up in southwest Oklahoma on a purebred Hereford and Angus ranch. She was involved with the cattle business on many levels from working with her parents through their business, National Cattle Services, to raising and exhibiting Hereford cattle and serving as chairman of the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA).

She loves working with the juniors and promoting agriculture in her community. Catie is a registered nurse, working in the emergency department at Deaconess Hospital in Oklahoma City. Catie says, "If you're ever in need of some

entertainment, just stop by the MCS stall for stories about life in the ER!" Welcome back Catie!

Colleen Chaffin

While Colleen Chaffin hasn't always been involved directly in the Hereford breed, she has always been involved in the cattle industry. She started out as a Shorthorn breeder in the state of Illinois. Her parents owned a small farm in central Illinois, right outside Springfield, where they raised corn, soybeans, hay, Shorthorn cattle and three breeds of sheep, Oxford, Montadale and Hampshire.

Colleen and her two younger sisters exhibited at county fairs all over the state of Illinois. They also worked in the beef cattle department at the Illinois State Fair, as their dad was the superintendent for many years. When his health began to fail, Colleen assumed his position in 1995 and remained superintendent until her move to Texas in 2002.

Colleen's Shorthorn activities included serving as the 1983 Illinois Shorthorn Lassie queen and becoming the president of the National Shorthorn Lassie Association in 1992. She served in almost every capacity on the Illinois Shorthorn Lassie Association board, including president, treasurer and queen chairman. While Colleen was on the board, the Illinois Shorthorn Lassies began a hospitality night for all the Shorthorn exhibitors at the Illinois State Fair and published a cookbook.

While Colleen was on the national board, the National Shorthorn Lassies were able to raise dues so that they could fund more scholarships and junior programs. They also held a national vote that altered the costume worn by the queens to make it more appealing to young girls while keeping it true to tradition.

Before leaving Illinois for Texas, Colleen and her husband, Jeff,

served on the committee for hosting the 2002 Junior National Shorthorn Show in Springfield, Ill. They had also been selected to take over the position as lead advisors for the junior association.

When her husband took the purebred manager position at W4 Ranch in Morgan, Texas, their family made the switch from Illinois to Texas, where Jeff was a native. Their two oldest, Garrett and Logan, were already involved in 4-H, so it was a given that they would get involved in Texas.

Colleen agreed to serve as the 4-H leader, and 10 years later, she still has that position. As her children began showing Herefords, they became active in the Texas Junior Hereford Association (TJHA) and NJHA. Each of them has served or is currently serving on the board of directors with Logan currently serving as the president, Ashley as secretary and Garrett as a senior director. Maggie just finished her first term as a junior director. Ashley has also served twice as the state sweetheart. When the boys began as directors, Colleen and Jeff were elected as advisors and continue to this day.

As a Texas Hereford Auxiliary member since 2003, she has served on the board of directors and now is serving as the historian/reporter.

After starting out as an elementary teacher in the Morgan ISD system, she has now switched to high school English.

Colleen's children have always been a priority. She is now a proud Aggie mom with son Garrett as a member of Texas A&M's class of 2013 and Logan in 2015. Their younger sisters, Ashley and Maggie, are determined to follow in their footsteps in 4-H, FFA and TJHA and as students at Texas A&M. Ashley hopes to one day serve as the National Hereford Queen, and Maggie wants to be on the NJHA

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National Hereford Women

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

President – Mary Ann Berg, Dalton, Ohio

President elect – Denise Billman, Newcomerstown, Ohio

Vice president – Gay Maddox, Zionsville, Ind.

Secretary – Ann Guess, Jayton, Texas

Treasurer – Shellie Collins, Chattanooga, Okla.

Parliamentarian – Jill Bielema, Ada, Mich.

Historian – Jeanine Radel, Spring Green, Wis.

Membership – Paula Acheson, Woodbine, Kan.

Queen co-chairwomen – Jill Bielema, Denise Billman

Ways and means chairwoman – Denise Billman

DIRECTORS

Beth Burns, Pikeville, Tenn.

Colleen Chaffin, Morgan, Texas

Lauren Echols, Arlington, Va.

Barbara Ernst, Windsor, Colo.

Cheryl Evans, Winona, Miss. (ex officio)

Susan Gebhart, Claremore, Okla. (ex officio)

Lori Riffel-Hambright, Chapman, Kan.

Susan Hayhurst, Terre Haute, Ind.

Shannon Mehaffey, Grandview, Texas

Jeanine Radel, Spring Green, Wis.

Catie Sims, Oklahoma City, Okla.

Diann Strickland, Mershon, Ga.

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board. It seems Colleen's involvement in the Hereford breed won't slow down for quite a few years!

Lauren Echols

Lauren Echols grew up on her family's registered Hereford and Angus operation in north-central Texas. She has long had a passion for production agriculture. Spending a lot of time in the show barns with her younger brother, Will, she learned many valuable life lessons from her time with Hereford youth from across the nation.

Lauren served the Texas Hereford Association as its sweetheart and queen and was on the TJHA board for many years. An active 4-H member, Lauren served on the Texas 4-H State Council and was awarded a Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo scholarship for her 4-H activities as well as being named as the first recipient of the Gary Bishop memorial scholarship.

While at Texas A&M, Lauren served on the student council for the College

of Agriculture and Life Sciences. She was also a member of the Alpha Zeta honor fraternity.

After graduating from Texas A&M University in December 2005, Lauren moved to Arlington, Va., to learn more about how policy decisions in Washington affect farmers and ranchers throughout the U.S. After working with the National Cattlemen's Beef Association for more than a year, she transitioned to another ag trade association, USA Rice Federation. For the past 4.5 years, Lauren has been proud to represent the U.S. rice industry. She knows that her members have more respect for her because she comes from an ag background and can speak to them on their level.

In addition to her work duties, Lauren also served the Texas Hereford Auxiliary as its reporter/historian from 2008-2010. An active member of the National Capital A&M Club, she currently serves as the first vice president of the club and has served

as the vice president of activities in the past. She serves as a tutor for underprivileged kids through Horton's kids after school reading program and is a member of First Baptist Church, Alexandria, Va.

Lauren is still active in her family's ranching operation. She is in charge of the majority of the marketing for the Muleshoe Ranch's annual Range Ready Bull Sale. She works with the magazines to publish the ranch's advertisements and also writes its sale letter and catalog and helps keep its website up to date.

Serving on the NJHA board from 2001-2004, Lauren had the opportunity to work with the American Hereford Women and the National Organization of Poll-ettes through their work at various junior activities. Lauren was the recipient of the John Wayne Scholarship as well as the Bud Snidow Award. She says she looks forward to working with the NHW as it continues to support juniors in the Hereford industry. **HW**

Retiring comments

Cheryl and I compared notes about this column, and as usual we were thinking the same thing. We've each served six years on the National Organization of Poll-ettes/American Hereford Women then the National Hereford Women (NHW) board of directors. In the process we've both been blessed with many friendships that will last a lifetime.

Additionally we've been part of an organization that has grown and transformed itself to keep pace with the times while still fulfilling the mission of its predecessors. NHW's mission includes more than 20 scholarships, awards and contests offered for Hereford youth.

These initiatives all have two universal truths in common. First is the knowledge that preparing Hereford youth for their future in the cattle business is fundamental to our breed's continued prominence within the industry. Second is the circumstance that, in today's world, folks who give their time to organizations such as NHW aren't easy to come by. Both of these truths are defining elements of who and what make NHW important, what defines its character and what makes it work.

As the mother and aunt of young women who paid for part of their college educations with Hereford scholarships, we can personally attest to the importance of the opportunities NHW makes possible by collaboration with HYFA (Hereford Youth Foundation of America) and others within the American Hereford Association (AHA) community.

We can assure you that what the girls learned in the barn and the folks there who helped pay for part of their educations by supporting these programs are never far from their minds. There are scores of Hereford kids now working in a variety of professions who were raised, socialized and educated by the "Hereford family." What they know about agriculture, making a

living, responsibility and supporting each other takes them far in life but, hopefully, never too far from the barn and their roots.

As longtime members and recent directors within the women's association, both Cheryl and I have seen extraordinary effort, time, talent and dedication on the part of the women we have served with. Margaret Mitchell said of the book "Gone with the Wind" that she wasn't writing a love story, she was writing a story about women with gumption. Gumption is defined as having initiative, resourcefulness and courage.

A woman with gumption doesn't sit around dissipating and stewing about things; she's at the front of a train of her own getting things done. We think many women in agriculture have gumption, but we know the women who serve on NHW's board have it. These are the women who routinely send e-mails at 1 a.m. after a day at work, then help with their own cattle and also make time for their board duties.

There are no socialites or casual observers on the NHW board. These are the women with gumption, who each take on four or five jobs per year associated with their board service, work for everybody's kids at the Junior National Hereford Expo, donate their money, maintain the organization and generally keep the train going. These are women who know the cattle business, believe in Herefords, love Hereford kids and pour their hearts, talent and free time into NHW programs during the four years they are on the board.

It has been our absolute privilege to serve with them, and we retire knowing NHW is in the best of hands. Many thanks to all of our fellow NHW board members and the NHW membership for all that you do for Hereford youth. Thanks also go to the HYFA board and everyone at AHA for your support and collaboration.

— **Susan Gebhart and Cheryl Evans, retiring co-presidents**