

# A Tale of Tenacity

by Hannah Williams

Each year during the Ladies of the Royal Sale, the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) auctions off the prestigious street sign that has historically been displayed outside the American Hereford Association (AHA) building. While the street sign can no longer be displayed outside due to the new office location, a special place has been found in the new headquarters to continue the tradition. This year, David (Dave) Lamenzo of Maple Edge Hereford Farm, Bloomfield, Conn., purchased the sign.

## His start

Maple Edge Hereford Farm got an early start in the back of Dave's mind 65 years ago when he worked alongside a local veterinarian. Some

of his veterinary trips included local dairy, Hereford and Angus farms, the latter of which he has deemed "black critter" farms. Within a short time of working with the vet, he purchased six Hereford heifers.

In late 1967 he was on his way to the Vietnam War to serve as a combat officer with the renowned 101st Airborne Division. While overseas, Dave received a letter from the original farm owner — who continued to manage Dave's heifers during the war — which stated that Dave's cows were still producing and doing well. However, after returning from the war Dave found the farmer had passed away and the cattle had been sold.

For many years after his service, Dave lost sight of the Hereford breed as he raised a family of six and tended to his work in construction management. In 2004 he was diagnosed with a recurrence of melanoma cancer and was often confined at home as a result of his treatment program. With his idle time, he began looking into the breed and noted how it had changed immensely. This discovery spurred him to invest in a cow-calf pair at the 2006 New England Hereford Association's annual sale. Unfortunately, six years later, he was diagnosed with severe prostate cancer and his outside activities were again eliminated.

Faced with the challenge of deciding what to do with his small herd, Dave knew he was not ready for a dispersal. His best option was to give his herd to some close friends in Connecticut who were dedicated Hereford breeders with a large herd of their own. Earlier this year, Dave acquired another cow with a bull calf at her side.

## Perseverance

Through the years, Dave has faced much adversity with his health but

has stayed involved in the breed by attending the AHA Annual Meeting almost every year for the past 12 years. He has enjoyed seeing the steady resurgence and growth of the AHA. Compared to his first Annual Meeting in 2006, Dave recognizes the commitment, dedication and genuine enthusiasm of the breeders.

He is happy to be a part of a breed with many friendships and welcoming people. Although the Association has gone through immense changes, he is positive the AHA has top-shelf staff and breeders leading the way through changes in genetics, technology, consumer preferences and challenges in the marketplace.

"My experience with the American Hereford Association has all been full of wonderful, friendly and outgoing people," he says.

In particular Dave is impressed with the unique drive of Hereford youth. He makes a point to speak to juniors to hear how the breed has helped them develop and where they look to take their future.

Dave began making plans to purchase the NJHA street sign at last year's sale when he saw the potential difference he could make supporting juniors. After returning home he put together his farm's budget for the next year and included the street sign in his plans. Because of his dedication and hard work, he was able to place the winning bid on Oct. 27.

Although none of Dave's six children have been involved with Herefords, he strongly believes in supporting the future of the breed, especially its junior program. The NJHA board and members are very grateful for the support they have received from Dave Lamenzo and cannot wait to see the improvements his contribution will bring. **HW**



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