

by *Bridget Beran*

Influential Hereford Women

Throughout the history of the Hereford breed, women have played a central role in its growth and success. Their stories have helped to enrich and to build the cattle industry as cattlemen, wives and mothers of ranchers.

For some they have been able to give back to the Hereford family in ways that live on beyond their years. Their commitment to the breed has given countless youth opportunities over the years to pursue their own dreams and goals. Estelle Matasovic, along with her husband, John, cemented their legacy in the Hereford breed with the OXO World Traveler Scholarship through the Hereford Youth Foundation of America.



Estelle Matasovic

Estelle's influence

Born in 1916, Estelle committed her life to the Hereford breed alongside her husband. Raised on a small farm near Pana, Ill., Estelle was the daughter of Lithuanian immigrants. She taught in a one-room schoolhouse after graduating from Illinois State Normal College before moving to Chicago, where she married John Feb. 26, 1938.

They operated OXO Hereford Ranches in Mokena, Ill., and Ridgeway, Colo. Hard workers through and through, they also cofounded two companies: Universal Welding Supply and OXO Equipment Co. Alongside operating the ranches, John was a welding engineer and patent holder while Estelle ran the office business, handling billing, accounting and advertising.

Traveling and promoting the Hereford breed was a top priority for Estelle and John. Throughout their lifetime, they attended nine different World Hereford Conferences and had the opportunity to visit Hereford operations in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Uruguay and various countries in Europe. Estelle believed in the value of experiencing ranching across the world and learning from farmers and ranchers who operated in different ways.

Her dedication to the Hereford breed and the growth of Hereford women was most evident in 1967. With the teamwork of six other women, she founded the American Hereford Auxiliary, which would eventually become the National Hereford Women (NHW). Estelle went on to serve as the first vice president for the organization in 1969, and was president in

1970. In 1985 she was named the Outstanding Hereford Woman by the American Hereford Auxiliary for her commitment to the breed.

Estelle and John raised two daughters, Linda and Marilyn, who grew to also be involved in the family business, with Marilyn managing the ranches in Colorado and serving as the coeditor of the first newsletter published by the American Hereford Auxiliary. Marilyn also served as president of the American Hereford Auxiliary in 1993 and oversaw its transition to the American Hereford Women.

Following Estelle's death in 2003, her daughters established the OXO World Traveler Scholarship in memory of their mother and father to provide young people from the Hereford family with the opportunity to travel to the World Hereford Conference that Estelle and John held in such high esteem. Held every four years, the conference gives a student the means to travel to far-reaching places like the 2020 World Hereford Conference, which will be held in New Zealand.

The NHW will be featuring historic women from the breed throughout the year in its newsletter and the *Hereford World* column, so stay tuned and get a look at some of the great women of America's past!

Become a member

Want to be a part of the NHW's board? Applications are due Aug. 1. You can email your application to nationalherefordwomen@gmail.com.

Dues can be paid at any point throughout the year. A membership form can be found on the website or emailed to you. **HW**

To join and to learn more about the NHW, visit HerefordWomen.com or email nationalherefordwomen@gmail.com.



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