

## Leaving a Legacy

by **Hannah Williams**

*“The greatest legacy one can pass on to one’s children and grandchildren is not money or other material things accumulated in one’s life, but rather a legacy of character and faith.”*

— **Billy Graham**

I have chosen this quote for a number of reasons, but the main reason is when I began this wild journey of campaigning and selling myself to the delegates, my slogan was “Keeping Traditions and Building a Legacy.” Through involvement with the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) board of directors, I have gained knowledge, wisdom, friendships and, best of all,

memories that will last a lifetime. Although my time is up, I will never forget the connections I have made and the impact the NJHA has had on my life.

### Looking back

Instead of telling you about all I have learned and how I have grown as a person, I would like to simply share with you some of the fun adventures I have experienced with the board.

Not long after the 2017 Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE), where I was elected to the board, I attended my first Faces of Leadership conference as a junior director. On this trip we attended my first Kansas City Royals game. This was not only memorable because it was my first Major League Baseball game but, on this trip, I dedicated myself to learning every single junior’s name on the bus I was helping to lead. This was a challenge for me since I truly am bad with names, but with persistence and some jokes along the way, I learned every name.

One of the other most impactful moments for me came last summer at the 2019 JNHE in Denver. Following a long week of contests, ringwork, Hereford cattle and family, I received the sweetest thank you from a young junior. I was truly inspired by this note of appreciation because, even though I did not know the young girl at the time, I was impacting her in ways I didn’t even know. As a junior board member, it is little moments like this that make everything worth the effort. When I was younger, I also looked up to the junior board members in hopes to someday be just like



them, and now I am retiring my maroon jacket.

My most recent adventure with the NJHA was attending the World Hereford Conference in Queenstown, New Zealand. Not only did I get to explore New Zealand Hereford genetics, but I had the opportunity to explore Australia, too. Both of these countries predominately breed Hereford cattle, and getting to see the array of genetics they offer was any Hereford breeder’s dream. I was honored to represent the NJHA at the weeklong conference, where I met many breeders and interacted with other juniors, as well.

Overall, being on the junior board for the last three years has allowed me to experience the breed on a different level and to get to have the adventure of a lifetime. The most rewarding part of the experience has been serving the juniors and being able to interact with so many from across the country. It has truly been an honor serving on one of the best junior boards in the country with some amazing people by my side. Our junior association has reached unprecedented numbers and being a part of it has been amazing.

There have been so many juniors who have touched my life and have positively impacted



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my time as a board member. I hope anyone who has a burning desire to be on the board gives it his or her all to try. When I ran, I had no clue what the outcome was going to be, but with

a lot of hard work and heart, I was pleasantly surprised. As our junior association continues to grow, I hope traditions will be kept and juniors who want to leave their own legacy do so.

While my time with the junior board and maroon jacket may be up, I will never leave the Hereford breed and family that I have and love. **HW**

## Lasting Memories

by **Brandt Downing**

As the months rapidly close on the 2020 JNHE, I begin to reflect upon my amazing journey of being a junior board member. I think back to the memories made and the unforgettable relationships created through this one-of-a-kind opportunity.

### The journey

It all started the summer of 2017 in Louisville, Ky., as members were “Showin’ for the Roses” at the JNHE. This year, in particular, was a whole new experience for my mom and me. Not taking cattle, we were there for one reason and one reason only -- to achieve my goal of becoming a member of the NJHA board of directors. Running for the junior board was an opportunity for me to give back, not only to the breed I hold near and dear to my heart but more importantly to the people within it.

It’s coming up on my 14th year of being a member of this association. After all this time and involvement, I have concluded that it’s the people who make Herefords so special to me. Our Hereford friends were there for my family when we needed help the most, and I can’t begin to thank them enough. It’s crazy to sit back and ponder all the people who have entered my life due to me holding this position on the junior board.

From helping juniors handle heifers in the ring to carrying on conversations with industry-leading producers, the opportunities and connections will forever be with me. Being a junior board member has given me so many lasting memories. A few of my favorite memories include taking a ferry across the waters of San Francisco Bay by Alcatraz Island and the Golden Gate Bridge, attending my first MLB game

in Kansas City, Mo., and, the best of all, having to bail off a train in Grand Island, Neb., and travel by foot in order to finish opening ceremonies.

These past three years have been not only a blast but also a huge learning curve. Without a doubt, I can truly say I have gained a whole new perspective and an appreciation for the NJHA.

For those of you who haven’t been on the other side, I can promise you one thing — it’s a whole new ball game. There is so much work that goes into putting on events like Faces of Leadership and JNHE. I can’t even begin to emphasize the abundant amounts of planning, communicating and accountability that are required to turn these ideas into realities. It leaves me truly amazed. I can only hope to take with me a sliver of the work ethic those involved with the NJHA possess.

If I were to give any kind of advice to the young people within the Hereford breed, it would be to capitalize on all the opportunities that this association has to offer. Your time within it will fly by within a blink of an eye, so cherish all you are given and create your very own memories and lifelong friends. The opportunity is there.

### Special thanks

When it comes to thank-you’s, there’s only one place to start. To my parents, thank you for the life lessons that you’ve taught me, hauling me to shows all over and being there no matter what to support me in whatever I have my mind set to. You both have truly shaped me into the person I am today as I aspire to hold the character traits you live by. I love you. Second, to my “boardie team,” I can’t imagine sharing this experience



with anyone else; thanks, girls. I’d like to give a special thanks to Taylor Belle for putting up with me and being my go-to. Next, Amy and Bailey, thank you for everything you do for this association; you guys are true rock stars. Thank you for not giving up on me and pushing me to be the best I can be. I hope I didn’t cause either of you too many grey hairs. I would like to thank the rest of the junior board I served with, past and present, my advisors, and the entire American Hereford Association staff for all their hard work. Those are only just a few of so many other well deserved thank-yous. These past few years have truly been an experience of a lifetime. I hope to see you all in Louisville at this year’s JNHE. **HW**