

Surrounded by Heroes

Here's to those serving, sacrificing and influencing our lives.



Jack Ward is the executive vice president of the American Hereford Association. He can be reached at jward@hereford.org.

A hero can be defined as one who shows great courage, and as you read through this *Hereford World*, you will find those who have certainly shown some great courage. As you receive this issue around July 4th, we celebrate another Independence Day. We can certainly be proud of the heroes who fought for our independence and lost their lives fighting for our freedom.

The first part of 2020 has certainly reminded us of the freedoms we take for granted in the U.S. There were many heroes on the frontlines providing services through this pandemic who need to be commended. These start with healthcare providers, firemen, servicemen and anyone else who provided goods and services including ranchers and farmers.

Who's your hero?

We all have heroes from our past or who are currently a part of our lives. As we recently celebrated Father's Day, I am sure most of us would agree that our dads are some of our best heroes. I was blessed with one of the best. Both of my parents are heroes of mine because they gave our family everything we needed, and I do not mean monetary gifts. They taught us to work hard, to be humble and to treat others with respect. Most importantly, they supported all of us in whatever we did.

My interests lie firmly in the livestock industry — specifically the cattle business. Most of my friends and heroes are connected to the agriculture world. I would consider my parents as heroes and being the next to youngest in a seven-kid family, I also consider my older brothers to be role models. I was blessed with

great teachers and mentors as I grew up through 4-H and FFA and during college. My path has crossed with some great leaders during my career, and I really have great memories.

Herman Purdy and Harlan Richie were two of my favorites growing up, and I had the pleasure of crossing paths with them over the years and even shared the judging arena with them a time or two. I was sitting next to Don Good during the market steer show in Denver one year, and it was fun to sit and to listen to his thoughts. These folks were great evaluators, and they paved the way for many changes within the cattle industry, and it was so interesting to interact with them.

In more recent times, I have had the pleasure to work with some great people. The American Hereford Association (AHA) staff and membership is loaded with some of the best in the business. A few years ago, the AHA hosted a social during the Annual Meeting, and I was sitting with Bud Snidow. You talk about a historian. Bud was one of the best, and I was fortunate to hear his experiences as I started at the AHA. As Bud and I enjoyed each other's company that evening, up walked James and Barbara Bennett (Knoll Crest Farms), and shortly after Gene Wiese joined our table. These breeders are icons, and they have paved the road for all of us in the cattle business.

My list of heroes certainly does not stop there. Please enjoy the "Ground Hero" stories throughout this *Hereford World*, and I hope each of you have a blessed July 4th, as we guide ourselves through this pandemic. **HW**