

A Friend to All

Editorial artist extraordinaire Christy Benigno retires after 15 years of dedicated design.

She shows up and leaves with a smile. She always exceeds expectations. She works hard for the farmers and ranchers who grace the pages she designs.

For more than 15 years, Christy Benigno has left her mark on the Hereford breed as the editorial designer/assistant. Every *Hereford World*, *Annual Report*, *Hereford Handbook* and *The Advantage* newsletter comes to life through her handiwork. During her time at the American Hereford Association (AHA), her title grew to include, Hereford Publications Inc. (HPI) chef, historian, InDesign master, caregiver, counselor and artist.

Her background is unique as her skillset. After 20 years as a respiratory therapist, Christy took a leap of faith and pursued her interest in graphic design. While working for the American Angus Association, she found her niche with editorial. In 2005, she joined Team Hereford as *Hereford World's* editorial designer.

Christy's talent doesn't set her apart as much as her grace, compassion, wisdom and heart. Her industry friends share their favorite memories and well wishes for this special lady.

From former editors

Angie Denton

I remember interviewing Christy when I hired her at Angus. The fact that her first career was in the medical field intrigued me. She was so easy to talk to and was so sincere in wanting to grow in the graphic design field.

Successfully encouraging her to join the *Hereford World* editorial team was absolutely the best thing I did during my tenure at Hereford. She



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— Crystal Albers

brought professionalism, consistency, a creative eye and a true dedication to producing a quality product to our team.

Christy's commitment to following editorial design rules is why she is one of the absolute bests at what she does. She understands the importance of accuracy.

Although she did not grow up in agriculture, and graphic design was not her first career, she excels and is truly one of the best livestock editorial designers in the country. She understands and appreciates white space and will not “cheat” the settings to fill. She takes the extra time to have editors write or edit more to make it fit. She is the

“Consistency Queen,” and I love her for that. I have missed her since the day I left the *Hereford World* team. Not a week goes by when I'm working on a design project that I don't think about how Christy would lay it out.

Her sincerity, friendship and ability to encourage inspires me. She continues to influence me to want to be a better mother, sister and daughter. Her passion for her family and faith is second-to-none. She is a great designer and employee, but most of all she is an amazing individual.

Christy, you deserve to enjoy your retired life to the fullest. Make this the best chapter of your life.

Julie Mais

Christy and I led the *Hereford World* redesign efforts together in 2017, which went on to win an award. I really enjoyed going through that process with her and the HPI team. She had been through a redesign before, so really, she was the expert. Her design is so subtle and brilliant that readers don't realize how it

improves the reading experience – it just does. Breaking apart the publication and putting it back together with a team member I fully trusted was a professional highlight for me.

However, it's the everyday, on-the-surface-ordinary conversations in the office about work and life I enjoyed the most. It was in those moments we became friends.

Christy did so much behind the scenes I'm sure most do not realize. She would see that something needed done, and she would take care of it. More importantly, Christy truly cares about breeders and her coworkers and that was exemplified in her high-quality work and kind interactions.

I've always looked up to Christy for her compassion, integrity and how she cares for people. She's a leader in that way – she's servant-minded. Christy is always thinking of others. She has influenced me to (try to) do better.

Christy, I hope retirement allows you the opportunity to fill each day as you wish ... travel, visit friends, spend time with family. I wish you nothing but happiness in this well-deserved new chapter!

From a former intern

Kayla Jennings

I have many great memories of Christy! Among my favorites are the times spent enjoying lunch together in the old Hereford office on Wyandotte Street. I always brought my lunch as an intern and usually sat with Christy. We had the greatest talks



Christy Benigno has brought the official voice of the Hereford breed to life for 15 years. Pictured (l to r) are HPI team members Christy Benigno, Samantha Albers, Teri Wolfgang and Alison Marx.

about life, memories and what's to come. She had a true gift of making someone feel welcome. As a young college student who had hardly left Texas, her welcoming spirit and kind heart made me feel at home in Kansas City.

Christy is creative, detail-oriented and a lifelong learner. She taught me the ins-and-outs of layout design during my time with Hereford, and I'm so grateful I could learn from her. She knew how to find the perfect balance of professionalism and readability while still making each design project unique and creative. It's easy to do one of those, but it can be challenging to grasp both. Christy made it look easy all while constantly embracing the new tools available as software constantly evolves.

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Team Hereford will miss Christy's spirit and smile in the AHA office. From all of the staff, we wish Christy all the best in her next chapter!

A favorite recipe

As the resident Italian in the office, Christy is a go-to for cooking tips and recipes — for food *and* beverages. Here is one of her favorites, a ratatouille, which is best prepared with fresh vegetables from the garden of Joe Rickabaugh, American Hereford Association Director of Seedstock Marketing.

- 1 large onion
- 1 green pepper
- Splash of olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 large can diced tomatoes
- 1 large diced eggplant
- 1/3 can apple juice
- 1 can water
- salt and pepper to taste



Here's a recipe she never repeated after "The Pesto Incident of 2013".

In a 5-quart pot, cook onions, green pepper, oil and garlic on medium until tender. Stir in remaining ingredients, cover and cook at medium for 15-20 minutes until eggplant is tender. Serve over cooked Minute brown rice. **HW**

Christy's talent in teaching provided the foundation I needed to succeed in this industry. Even more influential is her kind spirit and love for God. I hope she gets to travel and enjoy doing all the things her heart desires in retirement.

From former coworkers

Crystal Albers

I met Christy Benigno 18 years ago, during the first day of my first job following my college graduation. I was the inexperienced, new kid on the editorial staff of a beef breed publication, and she was one of the friendliest among the many friendly people who welcomed and taught me so much in those formative first years of my career in agricultural communications.

It has been many years since I had the pleasure of working with Christy directly, but her early influence remains. She was my example of how to practice both kindness and strength in decisions and actions, as well as pride in one's work while exercising humility. I suspect my experiences in working with Christy are not unique, and she has influenced many others in similar fashion.

Christy is the type of person we should all strive to be. She cares about others. She is conscientious and fair. She's courteous and respectful. She's generous with her time and is a good listener. These things not only make her a great person; they make her a person who likes to collaborate

and explore new creative avenues. I think that shines through in her talent and in her work on the page.

Christy deserves to experience much joy in this next chapter, whether that means exploring new places through travel, spending time with loved ones or enjoying life's little things. I wish her many new memories, friends, experiences and the ability to reap the rewards of her good and lasting legacy.

Bruce Huxol

I think Christy was the only one at our Monday meetings who actually had an agenda. (I got a lot of sketches and scribbles done at those meetings.)

Christy has always been very efficient and good at whatever she tries. She always made sure we were on time and met our deadlines.

My hope for her is she will be able to do whatever she wants,

anytime she wants. I wish her to stay busy, but to not work. All the best, Christy!

From her current team

The HPI team will do our best to live up to Christy's example, though she leaves large shoes to fill. We will miss her pesto-making stories, grapefruit-slicing tips and sentimental gifts. Most of all, we will miss her cheerful attitude, creative ideas, straightforward advice, helping hands and compassionate heart.

As she embarks on her next journey, we know she will carry on with her right hand held high, asking for God's guidance.

A proper farewell is not easy to put into words, but HPI Advertising Coordinator Alison Marx best describes Christy's influence:

Christy is a faithful, calm and reasonable thinker. Life has thrown Christy many battles in the time I have worked with her. Yet, she remains focused and true to her core values as a God-loving person and friend. Christy is the voice of reason to her teammates. Her insight and words bring peace, even in scary and sad situations. Christy's friendship is invaluable, and I will deeply miss her presence in the office. I wish her nothing but the happiness she deserves — traveling and enjoying life. I had never met someone like Christy prior to working with her, and our friendship is firmly rooted through our time as coworkers. **HW**