



Don't Be a Prisoner

Faces of Leadership offered life lessons.

by *Chloé Fowler*

National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) members from across the nation learned valuable insights about the importance of leadership during the 2021 Faces of Leadership Conference held July 28-31 in Oklahoma City.

The theme of this year's Faces of Leadership was "Improve YOU," and the conference focused

on leadership and industry innovations. It began with Kelly Barnes, professional leadership coach, challenging participants to find their "why."

"There are three types of people at leadership conferences," Barnes said. "First, are the learners, eager to drink in all the information provided. Second, are the vacationers, who are more excited to be away from home and have fun than they are to learn something from the experience. The last type of attendee is a prisoner. These people feel trapped; they do not want to be here and will spend the duration of the conference



A break was given to the attendees during lunch at OSU to capture pictures in front of the historic Edmon Low Library, with new and old friends alike.



Lauren McMillan, NJHA leadership chair, and Tar Tut, newly elected NJHA board director, spend time Tuesday evening team bonding before the conference begins.



Junior members hearing the playful and fun approach to capturing every opportunity at Faces of Leadership from opening session keynote speaker, Kelly Barnes.



Noah Benedict, NJHA chairman, asks each state representative to provide a fun fact about their state during the opening session.

showing everyone that they do not want to be here. So, which one are you? Which one will you choose to be?”

This inspiring challenge followed the 81 NJHA members from 22 states for the rest of the week. It occupied their thoughts as they participated in workshops led by the NJHA board and a game night. It followed them through a day spent on the Oklahoma State University (OSU) campus in Stillwater, Okla.



Keynote speaker Kelly Barnes encourages the attendees to focus on not allowing themselves to become prisoners throughout the duration of the conference.

Learning from leaders

The morning at OSU’s Range Cow Research Center and Purebred Beef Center included a marketing contest. Faces of Leadership teams wrote footnotes for a sale catalog, utilizing expected progeny differences (EPDs). Winning teams received OSU swag and scholarship prizes.

Later in the day, Clint Rusk, head of the OSU animal and food sciences department, shared life lessons and how they relate to leadership and influencing others. Next were presentations from the Food and Agriculture Products Center, including a taste test and insights about the factors affecting meat quality.

Ruth Inman, OSU agricultural communications assistant professor, encouraged the young Hereford advocates to find their “why” and have fun telling their stories about the breed and agriculture.

Other OSU presentations included the latest information about range beef cow efficiency and collecting related data, as well as a class in marketing purebred beef cattle.

These lessons from OSU remained front-of-mind through the rest of the day as NJHA members enjoyed a tour of Express Clydesdales and a Certified Hereford Beef® steak dinner in Express Ranches’ sale barn.



Meeting new friends from across the country through mixers and workshops is part of the process at Faces of Leadership.



Junior members competing in a contest to write footnotes for a sales catalog using expected progeny differences (EPDs) on different cow-calf pairs.

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The NJHA board spent Wednesday evening hosting their own leadership workshops and making the members think more critically about the different ways they can be a leader.

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Make the most of your moments

Although somber, visiting the Oklahoma National Memorial and Museum Friday morning reminded attendees to make the most of the time they have to make an impact on others throughout their lives.

Next, Faces of Leadership participants toured the Oklahoma National Stockyards, the largest calf and feeder cattle auction in the nation, in terms of annual volume, and the last functioning national stockyards. Amarie Griffeth is the fifth generation of her family to work at the stockyards. She conducted the tour and shared the history. Griffeth is completing her degree at OSU.

With words echoing in their ears of making the most of their experience and not being prisoners to themselves, junior members walked into an interactive panel with representatives from the Oklahoma Youth Expo and the Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association. These industry leaders shared their agriculture stories and offered advice to participants about being advocates for the industry and how to make the most of their college journey to prepare them for their future career paths.

When participants wrapped up the week's education with a visit to the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum, there was no way to know who were the learners, vacationers or prisoners described by Barnes. At least not at the beginning. The keynote presentation from inspirational speaker Aric Jackson ensured no one would leave a prisoner.

"Don't be scared," is Jackson's approach to life and to leadership. He shared four types of leadership styles — thinkers, directors, socializers and relators. He emphasized learning to lead in a way others need without losing yourself in the process.



Representatives from Express Ranches talk about the history of the ranch and its growing involvement with Hereford cattle.



Gretchen Mafi, OSU animal and food sciences professor, explains how meat tenderness and quality is tested and those numbers are translated into the grocery store and market.



Ruth Inman, OSU agricultural communications assistant professor, focuses on the difference between being an influencer and influencing others on social media.



Amarie Griffeth leads the Faces of Leadership attendees across the historic Oklahoma National Stockyards catwalk during their tour.

“Ninety-seven percent of people will look like leaders in the room, and then go home and shut down, not doing anything to make an impact or difference,” Jackson explained. “Three percent will take it home and transform their communities, families, people around them and their own life.”

Jackson encouraged NJHA members to be among the 3% of leaders who go home and make a difference. He stressed the need for great leaders in every aspect of life.

Last on the agenda, Faces of Leadership participants danced and celebrated the friendships made and lessons learned during a send-off dinner. It solidified the week’s leadership lessons and made it clear NJHA members left feeling inspired, excited, prepared to never be a prisoner in their life and to be part of the 3% who ignite change in society and the industry.

Stay tuned to NJHA social media channels and the American Hereford Association (AHA) website for upcoming information on the 2022 Faces of Leadership Conference. **HW**



Closing keynote speaker Aric Jackson inspires attendees with his message of leading boldly and finding your own personal leadership style.



NJHA board directors Lauren Jones and Luke Daniels prepare the vocals for the closing night’s dinner and dance.