

# HALL OF FAME, MERIT INDUCTEES HONORED

## HALL OF MERIT

**D**on Birk, El Dorado Springs, Mo., and Dale Stith, Mays Lick, Ky., were honored by the American Hereford Association (AHA) as the newest members of the Hereford Hall of Merit. This prestigious award recognizes those who have played an integral role shaping the Hereford breed and cattle industry.

### Don Birk

Don grew up in southeast Missouri on a diversified farming operation. His family grew crops and Hereford cattle, and they exhibited at local livestock shows. Don graduated from high school in 1965 and attended Southeast Missouri State University for three years, before transferring to the University of Missouri (Mizzou) in 1968. It was at Mizzou that Don joined the livestock judging team and met then livestock judging coach Glenn Richardson. Before he graduated from Mizzou in 1970, Don had developed a close relationship with Glenn.

In 1971, Don received a life-changing call from Glenn, offering the opportunity to return to Mizzou as a graduate assistant coaching the livestock judging team. When Glenn switched jobs about a month into Don's tenure, Don took over Glenn's students and coached the Mizzou livestock judging team to a national championship in 1971. Upon finishing his time at Mizzou, Don joined the *Drovers Journal* in 1972 as a fieldman and worked with the publication for six years. While working for the *Drovers Journal*, Don gathered experience selling advertising and working livestock sales. In April 1973, Don and his wife, Linda, were married.



Don then joined Eddie Sims with National Cattle Services Inc. to provide ring service, marketing and photography. Don developed his photography skills at National Cattle Services, and he stayed with the company until 1982, when he started his own business, Birk Enterprises. As sale books have gone from printing in black and white to color and live auctions have transitioned to online sales, Don has been there through it all.

A pioneer in the livestock photography industry, Don worked with Hereford breeders exclusively until the late '90s, when he began marketing cattle of all breeds. Don has spent many years working with breeders from across the U.S, providing ring service and picturing cattle. Some of Don's first clients were Glenkirk Farms, Maysville, Mo.; ACE Polled Herefords, Poughkeepsie, N.Y.; Mohican Farms, Glenmont, Ohio; and Beartooth Ranch, Columbus, Mont.

Since getting that call from Glenn to return to Mizzou, Don's career has spanned 51 years. While Don enjoys the cattle, he is especially passionate about the breeders, ranchers and business owners he's been able to meet.

### Dale Stith

Dale took an interest in cattle at a very early age under the tutelage of his father, Ralph, who was an accomplished herdsman who managed the 250 polled Hereford cows on their farm in Stith Valley, Ky. Dale attended cattle shows and sales with his father beginning at the age of 6. His early interest in the cattle business sparked a lifelong, passionate career in the Hereford breed.

Dale would work long hours on the family farm, and then groom a show string of cattle. He would load his string into a gooseneck trailer and show across the state of Kentucky. He showed at as many as 14 county fairs each summer, as well as the Kentucky State Fair, where he won many awards. Dale and his father had a keen eye for evaluating and selecting top genetics in the Hereford breed.



Don Birk was inducted in the Hereford Hall of Merit. Pictured (l to r) are: Jerome Ollerich, AHA Board member; Don Birk; Linda Birk; Chance Mays and Bill Goehring, AHA Board president.



Dale Stith was inducted into the Hereford Hall of Merit. Pictured (l to r) are: Jerome Ollerich, Dale Stith, Elizabeth Aldridge, Nathan Stith, Bo Brault, Jade Redden, Maggie Stith, Glenn Stith and Bill Goehring.

Dale is the oldest of three children. He graduated from Meade County High School in 1970, where he was president of the Meade County FFA chapter. He was later elected Kentucky State FFA President. Dale attended the University of Kentucky, where he was president of Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity, active in the Block and Bridle Club and a member of the Omicron Delta Kappa senior honorary fraternity. He graduated with bachelor's degrees in animal science and agricultural education in 1974.



Upon graduation, Dale returned to the farm where he continued building the family's purebred Hereford herd. However, he was eager to expand his horizons beyond his family's herd.

Dale is a master marketer and has been a passionate promoter of the Hereford breed for most of his life. Dale's original post-graduation plan was to teach high school agriculture classes. However, when one of Dale's mentors, A.W. "Ham" Hamilton, was preparing to retire, he encouraged Dale to attend auctioneer school. The class was two weeks long and Dale graduated in January 1975. He auctioneered for the first time at the Kentucky Hereford Association's

annual meeting, selling directory advertisements. In the years following, Dale spent his time selecting cattle, auctioning cattle, photographing cattle and assisting breeders. His loyalty to the Hereford breed, cattle marketing skills and cow sense would propel him to become one of the preeminent auctioneers in North America.

Dale has three children and seven grandchildren. He currently resides on a 50-acre farm in Mays Lick, Ky., with his partner, lover and friend, Elizabeth. Dale is involved in his community and was a magistrate on Meade County's fiscal court. He also served many years as the Meade County Fair board manager.

Dale has worked with Hereford breeders big and small from coast to coast and all across Canada. He is a mentor and friend to many and has an unmatched passion for Hereford cattle.

of Fame during the AHA Annual Membership Meeting and Conference.

The Hall of Fame award is presented annually and recognizes dynamic breeders who have improved the Hereford breed.

### **Odell Gelvin**

Odell Gelvin has spent a lifetime in the Hereford breed, beginning when he was 12 years old working on the W.E. Harvey Ranch in Ada, Okla., before and after school. After his father's death, he moved and began caring for the commercial herd and working in the show barn at the Colvert Ranch in Millcreek, Okla. Then, Odell worked in the Gus Delaney Ranch show barn in Ada until 1945, when he enlisted in the Navy.

After his military service, Odell returned to Oklahoma and married his high school sweetheart, Kate. Odell and Kate have three children: Ron, Linda and Susie.

Odell went on to work for Edg-Clif Farms in Potosi, Mo., and Banning and Lewis in Colorado Springs, Colo. Following his work in Missouri and Colorado, he became the herdsman for Northern Pump Farms in McHenry, Ill., one of the largest Hereford breeders at the time. During his tenure at Northern Pump Farms, few herds were more competitive at national shows.

## **HALL OF FAME**

Odell Gelvin, Fairland, Okla.; Bill King, Moriarty, N.M.; and Loyd Whitehead, San Angelo, Texas, were inducted into the Hereford Hall

Traveling the country via railcar, Odell fit and showed numerous champions, including the grand champion Hereford bull at the World Hereford Conference in Des Moines, Iowa. For years, through Odell's skill as a fitter and showman, Northern Pump Farms attained success in the carload shows at the National Western Stock Show. Showing a carload consisting of 12 to 15 head was no small feat, and in 1961, Odell was selected as the Herdsman of the Year.

In the mid-1960s, Odell accepted a manager position with Ogeechee Farms in Fairland, Okla. Under his direction, Ogeechee Farms' performance polled Hereford herd became a national leader. Odell was also instrumental in helping establish the Oklahoma Beef Testing Station in Stillwater, Okla. The center had a large impact on the Hereford breed, providing data on different sires.

During the 20 years he managed Ogeechee Farms, Odell bred, fit and showed both the grand champion carload of bulls and the grand champion Hereford bull in the same year. He also won the premier exhibitor award at the National Polled Hereford Show.

Outside of his work as a herdsman, Odell judged livestock

shows. Over two decades, Odell judged national Hereford shows across the U.S. and in Argentina and Venezuela.

Odell served on the American Polled Hereford Association Board of Directors and the Oklahoma Polled Hereford Association board of directors. He also served on the First Bank of Fairland board for many years.

Odell's passion for the Hereford breed runs deep, and his impact will be felt for many generations.

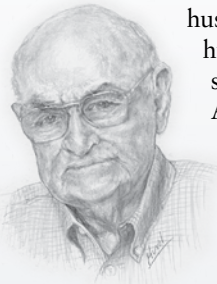
**Bill King**

Bill King started his Hereford herd as a high schooler in 1968 with the purchase of three heifers from Marshall Sellman. After graduation Bill attended New Mexico State University. Bill then returned to the family ranch, where he began buying feeder cattle and selling fat cattle for his family's 16,000-head feedlot. Bill has three daughters: Becky and her husband, Tom; Jenny and her husband, Josh; Stacy and her husband, Anthony; and six grandchildren: Jordan, Abby, Cash, Charli, Hayden and Lincoln.

For more than 100 years, the King family has been ranching in Moriarty, N.M. King Ranch is a diversified operation consisting of 30,000 acres of pasture, 4,000 acres of farmland

and about 1,200 registered Hereford, Charolais and Angus cows, along with 300 commercial cows. The ranch sells more than 350 bulls a year to mostly commercial producers and buys back customer cattle for finishing in the family-owned feedlot. Bill was honored as the New Mexico Cattleman of the Year in 2010. His family was recognized as the New Mexico Ranch family of the year in 2015, and he was recognized as a Golden Breeder by the American Hereford Association in 2018.

Bill comes from a long line of public servants; Bill's father was governor of New Mexico for three terms. Bill currently serves on the Hereford Youth Foundation of America (HYFA) board of directors and the Hereford Legacy Fund board. An advocate for the beef industry, Bill is a past president of the American Hereford Association, New Mexico Cattle Growers Association and New Mexico Livestock Board. He's a former regional vice president for the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, and a past board member for the Texas Cattle Feeders Association and Cattlemen's Beef



Odell Gelvin was inducted into the Hereford Hall of Fame. Pictured (l to r) are: Linda Wilmoth, Jerome Ollerich, Odell Gelvin, Betty Gelvin, Susan Spencer, Beverly Gelvin and Bill Goehring.



Bill King was inducted into the Hereford Hall of Fame. Pictured (l to r) are: Bill Goehring, Stacy King, Becky King-Spindle, Jenny Caldes, Bill King, Jerome Ollerich, Abby Spindle, Jordan Lockmiller and Brendon Lockmiller.

Board. Bill served on the Cattlemen's Beef Board executive committee for four years. One of Bill's daughters, Becky, currently serves on the AHA Board of Directors and Bill's granddaughter, Abby, served on the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) board of directors.

The King Ranch has been featured in the *BEEF* magazine Seedstock 100 for several years. Beyond the range, Bill's cattle have experienced success at national shows across the country. Bill is an owner of numerous grand champions at the National Western Stock Show, Fort Worth Stock Show, American Royal, Arizona National and New Mexico State Fair. He's also an owner of several impactful bulls that didn't step foot in the showring, like Loewen Genesis G16 ET and NJW 98S R117 Ribeye 88X ET.

Bill's impact can be felt across all facets of the beef industry. He's been a leader, public servant and influential voice for agriculture. His passion for Hereford cattle is second-to-none.

### Loyd Whitehead

Loyd Whitehead has been ranching since the day he was born in Brady, Texas. Loyd's grandfather, C.B. Whitehead, began breeding Hereford cattle in 1903. In 1958, Loyd bought Rocking Chair Ranch, and in 1963, he

began developing his herd of Hereford cattle. Since his initial purchase of Rocking Chair Ranch, Loyd has added ranches in several Texas counties. As of 2022, he has six ranches to which he dedicates his time.

Loyd and his wife, Carol, have two children and four grandchildren.

Loyd has committed many years of his life to service and the Hereford breed. He is a past director and president of the American Hereford Association. Loyd is a past president of the Texas Hereford Association, which he served as a director for 15 years. He is past president and director of the Concho Hereford Association and served on the Hill Country Hereford Association board of directors.

The Rocking Chair Ranch calves out cows in the spring and fall, and there are bulls for sale private treaty year-round. The ranch emphasizes fertility, structural soundness and udder development. The herd consists of mostly Line 1 Domino and Canadian-bred cows. Whitehead bulls are popular with ranchers in southern Texas utilizing Brahman cows; the bulls are proven to add value to the F1 programs. Additionally, the Whiteheads

exhibited cattle for many years and had a champion at every major show in the country.

Loyd is passionate about the youth of the Hereford breed. He funded and hosted the 1985 All American Hereford Expo at his ranch in Fort McKavett, Texas, and he hosted the event again in 1994. Loyd founded the Whitehead Ranches Scholarship and served on the HYFA board of directors

for eight years. He has received the Golden Bull honorary lifetime membership from the NJHA.

Additionally, Loyd is a past president and director for the American Braford Association and United Braford Association. He is a member and past president of the Texas Sheep and Goat Raisers Association, Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association and the

American Meat Goat Association.

Loyd's Rocking Chair Ranch has won numerous awards for conservation. A true public servant, Loyd is dedicated to the Hereford breed and improving the world that surrounds him. **HW**

