

Youth Movement | Blazing a Trail

The Greatest Life

by **Tar Tut**

“Success is not final, failure is not fatal; it is the courage to continue that counts.”

– Winston Churchill

As I reflect on my journey, the phrase ‘first-generation’ is the first thing to come to mind. My story began in South Sudan, a country torn by war until it gained independence in 2011. This quote by Winston Churchill reminds me of memories of my parents’ resilience, determination and grit as they laid the foundation for our family’s future.

In 1990, my parents immigrated to the United States, fleeing the civil war in South Sudan. They embarked on this journey with little knowledge

of the Western world, driven by a clear mission to provide a better life for their children. They faced the intimidating task of learning a new language and adapting to a foreign culture. Yet, through their firm commitment, they embraced the challenges before them.

Life is not easy; it is a journey filled with hardships. However, with the support of loved ones and personal champions, you, too, can overcome any obstacle. Being surrounded by a supportive group of people not only allows us to feel important but also helps us achieve those goals we once thought were unattainable.

The past three years have been an incredible chapter in my life, filled with both successes and failures. However, it has been our junior members who have been my source of inspiration and motivation. Being there to experience their joy alongside them as they achieve their biggest goals and watching them step out of their comfort zones have been incredibly humbling. The impact of my mentors is what shaped me into who I am today and what has fueled my fire to give back and make a meaningful contribution.

Attending my very first VitaFerm® Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE) in 2016, there was truly no better feeling. I felt welcomed with open arms, and it was then that I knew I wanted to leave a legacy and positively influence every kid and newcomer I encountered because being seen and heard is something we all desire.

My decision to run three years ago was a leap of faith. After completing my term on the North American Junior Red Angus Event board, I wasn’t ready to stop giving back. It was an emotional transition, but one filled with hope of what was to come. One that



Tar Tut, NJHA chairman

promised to be filled with growth, new opportunities, connections and more importantly, the realization that family is more than just blood.

The connections in the Hereford breed are truly something special. We are more than a community; we are a family that stretches from coast to coast.

To our juniors, I offer you this piece of advice: remember that life is a marathon, not a sprint. It is the courage to persevere through failures that ultimately defines our successes. Consider the resilience of my parents, who persisted despite countless setbacks. Their unwavering determination serves as a testament to the importance of resilience.

As I continue my path to the future, I carry the invaluable lessons learned from my parents’ journey — the courage to confront adversity head-on and the resilience to overcome challenges. With a community of people surrounding you with love, I believe that no dream is too distant and no obstacle too great. My goal is to empower, uplift and inspire the next generation, leaving a legacy of hope, determination and community support. Because together, we can leave behind a lasting impact for generations to come.



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A Heck of a Ride

by Wesley Denton

“Leaders are more powerful role models when they learn than when they teach.”

– Rosabeth Moss Kantor

This quote accurately summarizes my time as a National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) member starting when I was 7 years old.

As an NJHA member, I have had the opportunity to learn and grow every day. Competing in contests and shows, from illustrated speech and team marketing to judging and showmanship, as well as the hours spent at home making breeding decisions and working hair. These opportunities in and out of the showing helped me increase my confidence, enhance my public speaking skills, develop my work ethic and greatly affected the person I am today and who I strive to be.

Through the years I was able to win a few awards while building my cow herd. While I am proud of my accomplishments, I now realize the most valuable lessons I learned in the NJHA have nothing to do with the awards hanging on my walls. Showing and raising Hereford cattle taught me how to keep records, how to lose with grace and that there are always opportunities to improve. These lessons were the foundation of my desire to pursue a position on the NJHA board of directors.

Lead by example

As an NJHA director, my focus was to lead by example, serve as a mentor and most importantly serve with the interests of our members at heart. I believe it is important to take the time to create strong relationships with the entire membership, demonstrating that you are not only dependable, but also have character beyond serving in a role just to build a resume.

Communication is one of the most important keys to success as a leader. Being able to effectively



Wesley Denton, NJHA vice chairman

communicate within a group of people helps us understand our members and learn their needs.

One of my favorite events hosted by NJHA is the Faces of Leadership conference. This event provides members an opportunity to branch out of their comfort zones and expand their knowledge of the Hereford breed, while meeting other juniors at an event without the responsibility of taking care of cattle, like at the VitaFerm® Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE). From a personal experience, events such as this have given me the tools to succeed as a leader while developing lifelong friendships with junior Hereford members from across the U.S.

One of my fondest memories on the board was the 2022 Faces of Leadership in Billings, Mont. On the way home from this conference, several participants and board members were on the 6 a.m. flight that would be delayed for hours. Unfortunately, the flight was eventually canceled. After helping all the participants reschedule their flights for later that day, there were no seats left to fly home. Ralston Ripp and I decided that we would rent a vehicle to make it home that day. Luckily for us, the only rental car available was a 2023 Ford Mustang. Many memories were made on that 16-hour trip that I will never forget.

Looking back, I will always remember the lessons I learned

showing Hereford cattle. Most of all, I will keep trying, no matter the challenge I face, and always strive to serve others first.

Thank you

As I conclude my junior Hereford career, “thank you” is a phrase that I cannot repeat enough. For the past 22 years of my life, Herefords and my involvement in the NJHA have been my primary focus. There are lots of members of Team Hereford who have helped make my junior career possible and memorable. From the American Hereford Association staff (current and former) to the remarkable board members I’ve served alongside, to the Hereford breeders from across the country who have influenced my tenure and guided me, and especially to the Hereford youth — thank you for making a difference in my life. **HW**