

Mile-High Aspirations

Ten junior Angus members receive scholarships during 'Rush to the Rockies.'

by Linda Robbins

The American Angus Auxiliary and its supporters helped 10 qualifying junior Angus members stake their claim for future success when they announced the winners of \$12,000 in scholarships during the 2010 National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) in Denver, Colo., July 16.

The Auxiliary awards scholarships annually to five qualifying young men and five qualifying young women, chosen this year from among 27 applicants representing 19 states. To qualify for one of the scholarships, applicants must be National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) members and graduating high school seniors nominated by their state or regional associations.

Applications are due in May, and winners are announced during the NJAS Awards Ceremony. The Auxiliary has awarded these scholarships for more than 50 years.

The recipients for 2010 are:

Paige Wallace

Paige Wallace, Mount Vernon, Mo., is the first-place female scholarship winner and will receive \$1,400.

An outstanding student at Mount Vernon



Paige Wallace

Oklahoma State University after graduating from Butler.

"My passion for agriculture, combined with my ability to lead a group and speak in front of others, has influenced my decision to major in agricultural communications," Paige says.

Paige considers winning the Show Heifer of the Year Award and being named Breeder of the Year by the Missouri Angus Association for 2009-2010 some of her greatest accomplishments.

She is presently the president of the Missouri Junior Angus Association. Active in

4-H and FFA, Paige also volunteered with the Lions and Kiwanis clubs, sang in the high school choir, served as an officer in the Spanish and History clubs and was active in her church youth group.

Acknowledging that she is extremely career-oriented, Paige says she wants her future family to grow up in the same environment in which she grew up.

"I can't imagine raising my children anywhere but on a farm or ranch," Paige asserts. "Angus is one of the most elite and advanced breed associations in the country. This is the breed I will promote for the rest of my life."

Hannah Wright

Hannah Wright, Evensville, Tenn., is the second-place scholarship winner and will receive \$1,300. As a student at Rhea County High School, Hannah has tried to exhibit the



Hannah Wright

two characteristics of leadership she believes are most important — good listening and never considering oneself too important for the hard work of any task.

Hannah would like to see agricultural education in the nation's school systems as early as kindergarten, but she is aware that under the present guidelines adding another curriculum area is not possible.

"Education may not come in a classroom setting but in other areas of opportunity," Hannah says. "As leaders, we must become aggressive in our approach and gentle in our presentation."

Hannah is presently serving as president of the Tennessee Junior Angus Association after serving as a princess and a director. She is a member of the fundraising committee for the 2012 NJAS that will be co-hosted by Tennessee.

Hannah volunteered to serve as the spokesperson for the Rhea County United Way Campaign and is the youngest person ever to do so.

Hannah will attend the University of

Tennessee to pursue a degree in animal science with a minor in political science. Her ambition is to earn a law degree and to be in the forefront of decisions, change and reactions in the agricultural community.

"My earliest remembrance has been Angus cattle," Hannah says. "I will use my voice and my abilities to promote Angus cattle and the beef industry."

Jessica Clarke

Jessica Clarke, Rocky Ridge, Md., is the recipient of the \$1,200 third-place scholarship. Jessica will be attending West Virginia University Davis School of



Jessica Clarke

Agriculture, where she plans to major in agriculture Extension education and communication.

"I have learned a lot about livestock production through raising Angus and having to manage

the herd by myself," Jessica says. She made all the breeding and marketing decisions, deciding how to spend her money on cattle, which calves to keep, which calves to sell, and which ones would be best left in her herd for show and production.

"I have competed every year in local, state and national shows with much success," she adds. "I hope this is because I have made some very good decisions along the way."

Jessica has served in officer roles in 4-H, FFA and in the Maryland Junior Angus Association.

She credits her success as a leader to attending Leaders Engaged in Angus Development (LEAD) conferences, and says she is proud of the work she does with Partners in Active Learning Support (PALS), a program to bring agriculture education to elementary school students, and of her selection as an East Coast representative to the National Capital Area Society for Range Management conference, where she gave a presentation on her rotational grazing system.

"I plan to *always* support the Angus

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breed, no matter my career,” Jessica states. “I will *always* try to get children involved in the organization and to somehow always give back to this organization that has given so much to me.”

Mollie Lastovica

Mollie Lastovica, Fredericksburg, Texas, is the fourth-place scholarship winner and the recipient of \$1,100. In addition to her academic success, Mollie has served in



Mollie Lastovica

leadership positions within her county, district and state 4-H and FFA organizations in addition to serving as president of the Texas Junior Angus Association and as Miss Texas Angus.

Though she has excelled in the showing at every level and in many contests at the NJAS, Mollie is most proud of her participation in the NJAS mentoring program.

“While my Angus career thus far has been very successful, I am not oblivious to the fact that the greater purpose in serving as a leader for the state and national Angus organizations is to further influence the future leaders and members of these organizations,” Mollie says.

She will attend Texas A&M University this fall as an agricultural communications and journalism major. Mollie is ready to work in some area of journalism as an advocate of Angus cattle, beef and the agricultural industry.

“I know that if I continue to live with the values and characteristics showing cattle and serving as a statewide leader have taught me, I will come out a step ahead of most of my peers,” she says. “The future will always present a sense of the unknown, but one thing is for sure — Angus cattle, agriculture, leadership and integrity will forever be consistent in my life in all that I do.”

Kassandra Pfeiffer

Winner of the fifth-place scholarship and \$1,000 is Kassandra Pfeiffer, Orlando, Okla. Displaying solid leadership qualities, Kassandra has served as class president during all four years at Mulhall-Orlando High School, served as president of the Oklahoma Junior Angus Association for two terms, and as president of the Mulhall-Orlando FFA organization for 2007-2008.

She has led numerous champions in the

showing at the state and national level, and attributes her success to preparation and hard work.

“Most honors and opportunities I have received have not been handed to me,”



Kassandra Pfeiffer

She plans to attend Oklahoma State University and study animal science, and feels there are opportunities ahead in the NJAS and in the Oklahoma Junior Angus Association that she wants to be a part of.

Kassandra says her first agricultural outing was attending the Tulsa State Fair with her family when she was 2 weeks old. As a fifth-generation Angus breeder, she says the Angus business resembles a wheel that is constantly turning and coming around, and if all goes well, the wheel moves individual operations, and the industry as a whole, in a forward motion.

“I want to be a part of the Angus industry and hope to be one of its leaders to promote and continue the traditions my heritage has taught me,” Kassandra says.

Thomas “Drake” Yon

The first-place winner of the young men’s scholarship and recipient of \$1,400 is Drake Yon, Ridge Spring, S.C.

Drake says the world is run by people who “show up,” and he has been showing up for a long time. He is presently serving as the vice president of the South Carolina Junior Angus Association, and has also served in officer roles in FFA.



Thomas ‘Drake’ Yon

“I have spent my entire life submersed in the Angus industry,” Drake says. “It has been a key factor in shaping me into the person I am today, positively influencing my life on many levels.”

At Ridge Spring-Monetta (RSM) High School, Drake played varsity baseball and was captain and quarterback of the varsity football team. He was an academic all-star

athlete and was the vice president of the RSM Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

Drake says team sales is his favorite NJAS contest because it is “real world.” Drake will be attending Clemson University this fall as an agricultural economics major. After graduation, he plans to return to his family’s farm and eventually take over management of the cattle and the land.

“I think it is very important to stay current on technology and issues that will affect us in the beef industry,” Drake says. “As I get older, I know I will have a greater impact on all of these associations, as I will continue to ‘show up’ and will take on even more responsibility.”

Tanner Rayl

Tanner Rayl, Hutchinson, Kan., is the second-place scholarship winner and will receive \$1,300.

Tanner convinced his parents when he



Tanner Rayl

was 12 to allow him to purchase two cow-calf pairs from a local Angus breeder.

“Little did I realize the positive and lasting impact that would have on my entire future!”

he says. He now has a herd of 20 cattle and has taken a course in order to learn how to artificially inseminate (AI) them himself, which he has done for the last three years.

Tanner has had a successful career in the showing at the local, state, regional and national levels. He has competed in the Cook-Off, poster, team fitting, and creative writing contests at the NJAS. He has also been active in 4-H and FFA while running a custom hay service and clearing snow and ice from the walks at four local banks.

Tanner will attend Hutchinson Community College this fall, taking courses from the pre-veterinary science curriculum, with a plan to apply to numerous schools of veterinary medicine. He hopes to be accepted at either Kansas State University or Oklahoma State University and is considering a career as a veterinarian who performs AI and embryo transfer (ET).

“The responsibility, dedication and tenacity I have learned by raising Angus cattle will certainly benefit me in this endeavor,” Tanner says. “Whatever the future holds for me, I know without a doubt that it will be filled with Angus cattle.”

Ty Bayer

The third-place scholarship winner and recipient of \$1,200 is Ty Bayer, Ringle, Wis.

Ty has been an active and successful participant in team fitting, quiz bowl and the Cook-Off at NJAS. His passion is livestock and meats judging, and he has been a member of competitive 4-H state and national teams.



Ty Bayer

“I can honestly say that most of my life has been spent

in the barn, at an Angus show, or participating in some form of livestock activity,” Ty says. “During my junior Angus career I have learned valuable life skills such as respect, dedication and hard work.”

Ty has had a successful career in the showing at every level, culminating in leading the supreme champion heifer at the Wisconsin State Angus Preview Show while winning supreme champion showman at the Wisconsin State Fair in 2009.

He plans to attend South Dakota State University (SDSU) as an animal science major with a possible minor in meat science or agronomy. He plans to compete on SDSU’s meat and livestock judging teams.

“My exact career choice is yet to be determined, but no matter if I choose a future in animal science, agronomy or a return to our family farm, I know that the Angus breed will always be a part of it,” Ty says.

Colby Myers

Colby Myers, Harrodsburg, Ky., is the fourth-place scholarship winner and recipient of \$1,100.

A graduate of Boyle County High School, Colby is active in and passionate about 4-H and FFA livestock judging and has had outstanding success in state and national competitions.



Colby Myers

Wanting to increase interest and participation, he has taken on the responsibility of coaching all age groups in his county organizations.

“I have grown up on my family’s purebred Angus farm and became actively involved on the farm at a young age,” Colby

says. “I rapidly gained interest in exhibiting the elite heifers from our small herd to help advertise and reach buyers through success in the showing.”

Colby is presently serving as treasurer of the Kentucky Junior Angus Association and has been a participant in the NJAS livestock judging, quiz bowl and Cook-Off. He enhanced his leadership skills by attending Raising the Bar and LEAD conferences, and by serving as president of his local FFA chapter and vice president of the Bluegrass region.

He plans to attend the University of Kentucky to pursue a major in agricultural economics with a minor in business management. Colby has several different career interests, though the two he most favors right now are loan officer and purebred Angus sales manager.

“In addition to my career, I will also keep my herd of Angus cattle on the side,” he adds. “This will provide a secondary source of income for my family and give my children the same opportunities I had growing up.”

Colton Kreager

Receiving the fifth-place scholarship and \$1,000 is Colton Kreager, Newark, Ohio.

Colton has had an outstanding career in the showing at the local, state and regional levels, and has enjoyed success in the poster contest and quiz bowl at the NJAS.



Colton Kreager

“When I was 8 years old, I was given an orphan Angus calf to bottle-feed. Our neighbor, who raises registered Angus, said I could keep it if I promised to take care of it and learn everything I could about raising cattle correctly,” Colton says. “I joined 4-H, the Ohio Junior Angus Association and the NJAA that same year, and started reading everything I could get my hands on about cattle. I have learned integrity, responsibility, how to win and lose, morals, time management and other important life skills while participating in agricultural activities.”

A graduate of Licking Valley High School, Colton plans to attend The Ohio State University Agriculture Technical Institute in Wooster, Ohio, to study agriculture and Extension education in order to become an agriculture teacher in a rural community.

While he has enjoyed “being in charge” in the many leadership roles he has held in the organizations he has been involved in, Colton says it’s even more satisfying to know that he helped other members grow and develop because of the leadership he provided.

“I know I will feel that same pride when I see my students learning and becoming independent, productive members of their community,” he says.

