

The Few, the Proud

The American Angus Auxiliary is proud to announce the 10 scholarship winners and five candidates for the title of Miss American Angus.

by Lindsay King, assistant editor

One of the most anticipated events of the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS), besides the showmanship contest, is when the Auxiliary announces the 10 recipients of more than \$17,000 in scholarships. Chosen from a pool of graduating seniors from across the nation, five males and five females left Madison, Wis., with a boost from the Auxiliary into their freshman year of college.

Applicants must not only be members of the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA), but they also have to be nominated by their state or regional associations to apply. A tradition for more than 50 years, the Auxiliary is proud to contribute to the educational endeavors of its junior

members as they transition into new stages of life.

From 1967 until 1980, the first-place female scholarship winner was named the National Angus Queen, although the title was changed to Miss American Angus in 1973. Since 1980, contestants have been competing for the title of Miss American Angus from the pool of scholarship applicants, a tradition carrying on today.

Annually hosted at the Angus Convention in November, the 2019 Miss American Angus contestants are Madison Weaver, Ephrata, Pa.; Lindsey Decker, Philo, Ill.; Reagan Skow, Palisade, Neb.; McKayla Raines, Seaman, Ohio; and Katie Brock, Stilesville, Ind.

Female Scholarship Winners

Madison Weaver

Taking top honors of the scholarship winners is Madison Weaver from Ephrata, Pa.

The daughter of Fred and Tammy



*Madison Weaver
first place*

Weaver cannot envision a future without cattle and credits her “grassroots” upbringing for her aspirations to remain in the agricultural industry. With ambitions to become a large-animal veterinarian, Weaver will study animal science and agricultural business at Penn State University.

“While raising my own herd, I paid

more attention to what goes into my animals’ diet, as well as researching the best veterinary protocols,” says the nine-year NJAA veteran. “I find both of those fields interesting. My mind may change about my future career, but I do know my love for Angus and the agricultural industry will remain constant.”

Weaver’s first NJAS was spent huddled near the tack stall. The once shy and timid girl quickly blossomed into a confident and outgoing junior member at her second NJAS. Her involvement rocketed to new levels as she found her stride in the association. She competed in prepared and extemporaneous public speaking, judging, team sales and marketing, and career development for the past six years at nationals.

“These activities not only helped me get out of my comfort zone, but also built my self-confidence,” Weaver adds. “The NJAA has helped

me become a confident, responsible, well-spoken individual through the contests, interactions with others and leadership programs it offers.”

Servant leadership was instilled in Weaver at a young age, contributing to her desire to give back to the Association now, in the past and future. From serving on committees of the Pennsylvania Junior Angus Association to standing in a grocery store aisle as Miss Pennsylvania Angus, talking to consumers about beef, Weaver leads by example.

“There are so many people in the industry that have changed my life. The idea that I can also inspire others and help them reach their goals in agriculture is absolutely breathtaking,” Weaver says. “The Angus industry has opened so many new doors for me and I could not be more thankful.”

An outstanding showman up and down the East Coast, Weaver learned

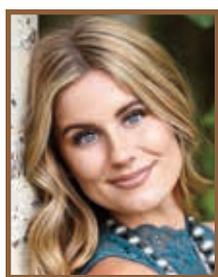
the fundamentals of showmanship by halter-breaking calves for her family's annual club calf sale. Building on her own Angus herd, Weaver understands the importance of making informed breeding and management decisions.

"It was the middle of a night check during calving season when I stumbled upon a newborn calf with the placenta covering its head. With a little bit of help, she started breathing," Weaver reminisces. "It was then that I realized having Angus cattle is more than competing in shows and contests. As an owner of cattle, I am truly a caretaker. I am responsible for the welfare of my animals to produce a healthy product for the consumer."

The Auxiliary is proud to present Weaver with a \$1,900 scholarship and the opportunity to compete for Miss American Angus.

Madison Cox

"It is undeniable that the lessons I've learned through the NJAA have shaped me," says the Eagle Point, Ore., native. "My fondest and most applicable lesson learned goes hand-in-hand with the pride I've felt exhibiting my heifers at NJAS. This truly reminds me of the power of hard work and dedication."



*Madison Cox
second place*

Few residents of the state find long, hot hours spent in the barn and on the road fulfilling the way Cox does. The Oregon Junior Angus Association is few in numbers, but mighty in ambitions. Contributions from Cox have led to a 15% increase in state membership in a matter

of two years. An average of four members at NJAS has more than doubled in that time.

"At a young age, I began serving on the Oregon Junior Angus Association board and various committees, always planning strategies to grow membership and involvement," says the daughter of Brad and Buckley Cox. "I've continued to push for more involvement at the state and national level from our members. With the increase of membership, the need for ongoing education of all the Angus breed has to offer goes beyond the show ring."

The 2016-2017 Oregon Junior Angus Queen and 2017-2018 Western States Junior Angus Queen takes every opportunity to advocate for agriculture. Her various leadership roles supplied a platform for speaking to consumers and producers on the West Coast. Cox brought her entire school district to her family's operation for a tour of her Angus calf crop to drive home the necessity of funding for agricultural education.

"I want to establish more programs in our schools teaching youth of all ages and abilities about the cattle and Angus industry," Cox says. "Promoting and advocating for the industry that has shaped me into the person I am today will always be relevant in my life."

An accomplished member of her FFA judging team, Cox has traveled across the country evaluating livestock and broadening her perspective of American agriculture. A recipient of both the Bronze and Silver awards, Cox is dedicated to receiving a gold award in the future and credits her Angus herd for attaining her State FFA Degree.

Joining one of the most respected judging teams in the nation this fall, Cox will be studying agricultural

communications at Oklahoma State University. After leading champion heifers and cow-calf pairs through arenas in Oregon, California, Idaho, Colorado and Oklahoma, Cox is no stranger to the finer details of showing and raising Angus cattle.

"A lesson that is universal, applicable and will always hold true is that hard work, determination and pure drive can turn dreams into realities and change lives along the way," Cox explains. "An industry surrounded by those who truly know the meaning of hard work, determination and drive is the reason I am proud to say 'I am Angus.'"

Presenting Cox with an \$1,800 scholarship, the Auxiliary is proud of Cox's hard work and dedication to the breed.

Lindsey Decker

Pulling in third is Philo, Ill., native Lindsey Decker, the daughter of Ed and Kim Decker. This first-generation Angus breeder aspires



*Lindsey Decker
third place*

to establish a tradition of raising the breed within her family. Making the trip to Kansas State University this fall to pursue a degree in ag business with minors in leadership and agricultural communications, Decker plans to use her degree within the cattle industry. However, her ultimate goal is to expand her current Angus herd to become an elite breeder.

"My largest career goal is to raise animals who can compete well at a national level," Decker says. "I hope

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that one day my future kids will have a passion for the industry just as I do and that they will be left with a herd and a farm they can be proud of.”

Decker has successfully pursued roles within Angus royalty for the last five years and currently serves as Miss Illinois Angus. She says this has been her largest and most significant role in the association.

“Being part of royalty is not just standing in the ring handing out ribbons or representing our state,” Decker says. “Angus royalty is about being a leader and a role model to girls all over the state. Serving as queen this past year has truly shown me the impact I have made and can continue to make in the Illinois Junior Angus Association.”

At Decker’s first NJAS, she was pushed out of her comfort zone when she agreed to compete in team sales. With nerves wound tight, she anxiously waited outside the ring with the team’s heifer. With her jaw shaking and voice quivering, she opened their sales pitch.

“My nerves quickly melted away, and I gave the rest of my portion of the presentation perfectly,” Decker remembers. “I learned how much I enjoyed public speaking that day. That big lesson taught me to take every opportunity the breed gives me to get out of my comfort zone.”

Each year at the NJAS, Decker keeps herself busy competing in livestock judging, quiz bowl, team sales, public speaking, career development, graphic design, creative writing, photography, skill-a-thon and the cook-off. This year she brought a special heifer with her.

It was the wildest heifer in the bunk that caught Decker’s eye last summer in the first weaning group of spring calves. Tearing through a set of pipe gates, she managed

to hit every wall in the show barn, but Decker knew this heifer’s conformation fit the show bill. Her goal was to take her to the North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE) that November.

“When the NAILE rolled around, she placed second in her class and took home first in the bred and owned. That was my highest placing at a national show, ever,” Decker says.

A stranger at the show asking to purchase Decker’s heifer confirmed that she had reached the level of success she had always dreamed of.

Decker left Madison with a \$1,700 scholarship from the Auxiliary and the opportunity to compete for Miss American Angus in November.

Reagan Skow

One word that cannot be used to describe Reagan Skow, the fourth-place winner of the auxiliary



*Reagan Skow
fourth place*

scholarship, is quitter. The Palisade, Neb., cattlewoman has proven time and again she has the grit to get the job done, no matter the time and effort it takes.

“When I see the success of others in the show ring, I can’t help but smile at the fact that all of their hard work paid off in the end,” says the daughter of Brian and Tiffany Stoller.

Several years of finishing the team sales contest much lower than desirable, Skow and her teammates decided it was their turn to take home first place last year. Many late nights were spent practicing their presentation and getting peppered with questions from their coaches in preparation. The Nebraska team tied

for first last summer, fulfilling the goal of all their hard work.

“The NJAA has taught me to never give up and to always strive to do better,” Skow says.

At her first NJAS, Skow participated in the mentor mixer and extemporaneous speaking contest. That first public speaking contest served as the catalyst for Skow’s decorated career in the NJAA and Nebraska Junior Angus Association.

“Something I have done to impact other juniors in my association is getting them excited about national events to develop their leadership and social skills,” Skow says. “When I have attended conferences, I return home and share my experience with others so they will want to attend.”

Attendance from Nebraska junior members has increased significantly. She also helped start a mentoring program in her state association since the age gap between members is so large. Skow hopes this will help junior members get comfortable with other members and adults to enhance their communication skills.

As the current Miss Nebraska Angus, Skow uses her public speaking skills to advocate for the agricultural industry to all age groups.

“We can never have too many advocates and spokesmen for the population who are not on the same page as the American Angus Association and the agricultural industry,” Skow explains. “There is no way to preach to the whole choir at once, and that is why I want to put myself in situations with people who are not familiar with the industry.”

This helped Skow decide to pursue a degree in agricultural communications and animal science

at Oklahoma State University. Continuing with her beef roots, she plans to start meat judging and join various agricultural organizations.

Skow aspires to work for Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) to promote the brand and bridge the gap between consumers and producers.

“As I have gotten older and learned more about global agriculture, I find it very rewarding to know the beef we raise in Nebraska is in demand around the world,” Skow says. “It is fulfilling to know that what my family does every day plays an important role in feeding the world.”

The fourth-place winner of the Auxiliary scholarship will receive \$1,600 for school and is a contender for the title of Miss American Angus.

McKayla Raines

“The most valuable lesson I have learned has been to allow younger members to be involved,” says



McKayla Raines, the fifth-place winner of the Auxiliary scholarship.

“The youth are the heart of the Angus industry. When they are actively involved, it

develops their leadership abilities and allows them to step out of their comfort zone.”

Hailing from Seaman, Ohio, Raines is the daughter of Todd and Melanie Raines. Raised on Angus cattle, row crops and tobacco, Raines is a competitive contender both in the show arena and on the court. She has led both her basketball and volleyball teams to multiple championships.

“I learned through my involvement, both Angus and sports, that if I have confidence in myself, I can accomplish a lot more than I ever dreamed possible,” Raines says. “In the grand scheme of things, developing my leadership potential has been a gift that will provide benefits throughout my life and is a fundamental requirement for my chosen career path.”

Staying close to home and her Angus herd, Raines will pursue a degree in animal science at The Ohio State University with aspirations to become an anesthesiologist.

“Majoring in animal science will allow me to build a foundation based on science, and I will find business connections and opportunities within the agricultural industry,” Raines says. “Majoring in animal science will help build me as a well-rounded health care professional. I chose anesthesiology because I am passionate about physiology and the mechanisms that work to keep the body alive and functioning.”

With plans to remain actively involved in the Angus industry, Raines will continue raising her cattle, join the Auxiliary and work toward becoming a state junior advisor.

Building a high-quality herd to meet the productive standards of the industry is not only a family tradition for Raines but something she is constantly contemplating. Her dad instilled a trust in the science behind the methods, pushing her to utilize the latest technologies to make herd improvements.

“While sitting in the pasture either feeding my herd or just watching them out of pure enjoyment, I ponder the possible decisions I could make to continuously improve their quality,” Raines says. “I intend

to expand my herd once my show career is over, with the intention of producing sound, quality females with low birth weights, impressive growth traits, and high carcass and dollar beef values.”

A big proponent of the tools Angus offers producers, Raines believes these resources are an additional marketing tool for breeders. Explaining how impactful these can be to the consumer and producer is a place where Raines intends to help the Association expand its reach.

Value-added products and experiences is especially important to Raines. As the budgeting and finance chairman for the Eastern Regional Junior Angus Show, her focus was on the financial planning and expansion of the event.

“My goal was to allocate money for the Ohio Junior Angus Association to host the best Eastern Regional possible,” Raines says. “I have tried to expand by adding new fundraising ideas and sponsors. It has been an opportunity for the industry to reach beyond the normal clientele.”

The Auxiliary proudly gives Raines \$1,500 and she will also be competing for the Miss American Angus title.

Katie Brock

Also running for the coveted title of Miss American Angus is Katie Brock from Stilesville, Ind. An avid advocate for the industry and experienced Angus breeder and showman, Brock ironically associates two things with her Angus herd: Queenie and family time.

“Queenie was my first heifer that I showed in 2009,” Brock says. “We were fortunate to win our class at the Indiana State Fair. After that, I was hooked on showing cattle.”

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Brock Farms has been a group effort from the very beginning, by growing their Angus herd the family has truly grown closer together



*Katie Brock
sixth place*

over the years. Everything on the farm is completed as a team, from planting and harvesting crops to feeding and working cattle. “My favorite thing about working together as a family is everyone finds their job to do to make sure every mission is completed,” Brock muses. “I have truly learned the importance of family by raising Angus cattle.”

Inspired by the mission and actions of the American Angus Association, Brock intends to help the Association lead the way by advocating and involving members.

“Beyond the cattle-based services, the Association allows members to grow in many different ways,” Brock says. “With affiliate organizations like the NJAA and the Auxiliary, members have the opportunity to attend conferences, retreats and trainings.”

With an eye for livestock and skills behind the camera lens, Brock plans to combine both passions and start her own livestock marketing company. With services in photography, video, promotion and print material for all types of livestock, Brock wants to focus on helping local producers.

“I am a firm believer that not all grand champions come from ‘big name’ producers,” Brock says. “I find that local farms raise high-quality show animals but do not have the resources to market their animals properly for those next-level sales.”

Attending Lake Land College to hone her advertising and marketing skills, Brock will be an agricultural business major. As a sophomore, she will have the opportunity to put her aspirations to the test when she manages all aspects of the Lake Land Alumni hog sale.

Recognizing the contributions various organizations (FFA, 4-H, Indiana Junior Angus Association, etc.) have made, prompted Brock to pursue a life of giving back to the community that built her. Upon aging out of 4-H, Brock will run for an association position with her county fair board as well as contributing to Friends of the Danville FFA.

“I plan to stay involved in various leadership positions and help younger members transition into greater involvement and leaderships roles in the organization,” Brock says.

Probably the most significant, and challenging, role Brock has taken on was running for the Indiana Angus Princess title in 2015.

“I originally ran in 2013, I was very nervous about the interview process,” Brock remembers. “Even though I was not chosen to serve at the time, I decided to run again. If I would not have stepped out of my comfort zone and tried again, I would not have experienced such a great opportunity to make new contacts and friends that will last a lifetime.”

Brock is the fifth and final competitor for the Miss American Angus title.

Male Scholarship Winners

Daniel Rohrbaugh

It was a hot July day in 2011 at the NJAS hosted in Pennsylvania where Daniel Rohrbaugh saw his

11-year-life flash before his eyes. “I was showing my heifer when she spooked at something outside the ring. She jumped, knocked me down and her hoof literally landed inches



*Daniel Rohrbaugh
first place*

from my head,” says the first-place Auxiliary scholarship winner.

In swooped the Green Coats, leading to an inspirational friendship spurring Rohrbaugh’s involvement as a junior member.

“The chairman of the board that year became my friend and sought me out at future shows,” says the Seven Valleys, Pa., native. “That meant a lot to me as a little kid who did not know anyone outside of my state. His interest in me inspired me to want to be more active as a junior and become a Green Coat.”

The son of Douglas and Cathy Rohrbaugh has been found leading his Pennsylvania Junior Angus Association in almost every capacity possible. From leadership roles in the association to participating in just about every contest offered at the NJAS, Rohrbaugh is always actively seeking ways to improve himself and grow the Association.

“Junior members are the foundation of the Angus breed,” Rohrbaugh says. “It’s critical to retain their interest and expand our membership. As members age out, hopefully we will retain their membership in the adult Association, and continue their Angus herd.”

The fourth-generation Angus breeder plans to attend Kansas State University for a degree in

agricultural business with career ambitions in the sales and marketing sector.

“My participation in the graphic design and marketing contests at NJAS contributed to my decision to pursue this career,” Rohrbaugh says. “The marketing contest included creating business cards, ads and sale book covers. I also found satisfaction in creating flyers and sale booklets for my association. It blended two of my favorite things: Angus cattle and graphic design.”

Moving to the Midwest for college will allow Rohrbaugh to learn about cattle production from a different perspective. He intends to find an Angus breeder to work for part-time while in Manhattan.

“After I receive my degree I want to give back to the NJAA and 4-H programs that made me the person I am today,” Rohrbaugh says. “It’s important to remember your roots and always give back.”

At the end of the day, Rohrbaugh still comes back to the place where it all started: training heifer hair with his mom in the barn. The heifer he helped halter-break at 4 years old is now the veteran foundation cow of Rohrbaugh’s own herd.

“Heifers from that cow have gone on to win bred-and-owned shows on several levels, as well as produce prize-winning steers for other juniors,” Rohrbaugh says. “It makes me proud to know that my breeding decisions have led to success for other juniors.”

As a producer, outreach to the public is important for Rohrbaugh. He takes the public stage of his county fair to display posters highlighting Angus facts and other important information about beef cattle and the meat they produce.

“I find that face-to-face interactions are the best way to inform people about the Angus breed and the industry in general,” Rohrbaugh says. “Angus is in my blood, and I can’t imagine my life without them in it.”

The Auxiliary is proud to present Rohrbaugh with a \$1,900 scholarship.

Austin Pillars

A natural-born leader in the Angus breed and on the sports field, Austin



*Austin Pillars
second place*

Pillars from Martin, Mich., easily accepts challenging leadership positions with lofty goals at the forefront of his agenda. The son of Rodney and Laura Pillars helped blaze the trail for his cow-milking family into the world of Angus cattle.

“I was very lucky to be born into a family that milks cows for a living,” Pillars says. “My father did not want us to show dairy cattle for the fear of bringing sickness back to our herd.”

Settling on Angus was easy, as was finding knowledgeable families in the area for advice and direction for the heifers establishing the Pillars’ herd.

“We liked what the breed offered, but seeing how much fun junior members had at nationals cemented our decision to raise Angus,” Pillars says. “That first year I went to local and state shows, placing in the middle of the pack at the NJAS. I was more than satisfied, but it made me hungry for more.”

The classes, the work, the heat were all memorable experiences for Pillars. But what sticks with him most are the memories made in the

simple moments around a plastic table dealing another hand of cards.

“Advancing in life is not always about what you learn, but the friends and partnerships you gain along the way,” Pillars says. “The NJAA has allowed me to meet many unique people from all walks of life that have Angus cattle in common.”

Building stronger relationships was one of three goals Pillars had when he threw his hat in the ring for leadership positions within his state association. In his second term as president, his goals were to motivate members to participate by making them feel welcome and valued while also building a bond with the adult board of Michigan.

“As a leader, I feel more confident within my role when team members are walking beside me rather than behind me,” Pillars says. “Finding each member’s strengths and utilizing them to their fullest potential not only builds self-confidence within each member, but also strengthens the entire group and makes everyone more effective.”

Making the move to North Park University in Chicago, Pillars will use this strategy to be the best defensive lineman he can be for the Vikings football team while pursuing a degree in mechanical engineering. His college goals are to lead his team in tackles per game while adhering to high academic standards and continuing his active role in Angus.

“I have come to understand I am not just a showman, breeder or caretaker,” Pillars explains. “I am an ambassador, not just for Angus cattle, but the industry as a whole. I represent the new generation of cattlemen and have the responsibility to do everything in my power to surpass those who have set high

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standards before me and enhance what they have started.”

The second-place winner gratefully accepts the \$1,800 scholarship from the Auxiliary.

Garrett Bromenshenk

“Take the time to be someone’s hero.” It’s a simple statement by Garrett Bromenshenk of Billings, Mont., that many often forget. His



*Garrett Bromenshenk
third place*

heroes were the people who encouraged him: his siblings, older members of the Montana Junior Angus Association and his parents, Paul and Brenda Bromenshenk.

“At a young age I was diagnosed with a speech apraxia,” Bromenshenk says. “Basically, I could not make sounds or communicate with anyone outside of my immediate family.”

After surgery, Bromenshenk spent countless hours in therapy, on a mission to build his confidence and ability to communicate. Not only to speak clearly, but to do so eloquently and effectively. The livestock judging scholarship offer and candidacy for a state FFA position, speak to his accomplishments on that mission.

“It was in the contests at the NJAS that doors were opened for me,” Bromenshenk says. “No matter if I was good at something or not, I tried new things and pushed myself.”

Blessed with an Angus herd of his own, Bromenshenk rarely had heifer calves hit the ground. This led him to compete in the steer carcass program alongside his siblings.

“I will always remember the

last calf cow number 24 had,” Bromenshenk says. “He was not nearly as big as her usual calves, but it did not take long to notice his quality. We took him to Des Moines last year for the carcass contest.”

This Hot Lotto steer hit the rail jackpot, grading low-Prime with a 3.2 yield grade and meeting CAB requirements. Bromenshenk beat his brother in the bred-and-owned division, while also winning the owned division, a feat for any steer.

“This accomplishment is difficult to achieve. I was shocked, honored and blessed,” Bromenshenk says.

Attending Northeastern Junior College in Sterling, Colo., on a livestock judging scholarship, Bromenshenk will pursue his associate degree in beef production. He intends to transfer to a four-year school to get his bachelor’s degree in agricultural business.

“After college I hope to work in the beef industry, either as a breed representative or for a reproductive company,” Bromenshenk says. “I intend to continue raising Angus, but not just to have cattle. I need to incorporate DNA testing to continue raising Angus standards and provide the best meat on the market.”

Bromenshenk plans to invest in the youth of agriculture, just as the previous generation did for him. He recognizes that success takes practice, and with that comes hard work and long hours. All of which he found through the NJAA.

“The NJAA has been the backbone of my youth,” Bromenshenk says. “My confidence and cattle have benefited from my involvement in the organization.”

Eventually, he intends to return to the family operation as the sixth generation. Though his return will

come with the task of moving the operation out of urban sprawl.

The Auxiliary is proud to present Bromenshenk with a \$1,700 scholarship as the third-place winner.

Garrett Handsaker

“The American Angus Association’s drive to be the leading beef association



*Garrett Handsaker
fourth place*

is similar to my own drive to be a great judge and innovative cattleman in the future,” says Garrett Handsaker from Pearl City, Ill. “I have always been an avid livestock

judge and hope to continue that deep into the future.”

When Handsaker first started showing cattle, fitting peaked his interest. His parents, Paul and Dianne Handsaker, told him to wait until he could learn the trade from an experienced fitter.

“I attended my first Sullivan’s Stock Show University in 2014 and was instantly hooked,” Handsaker says. “In 2015, I made the national fitting team and we ended up second.”

The following year brought devastation when Handsaker did not make the fitting team. It only made him work harder for the next year to ensure his place at nationals in the fitting contest. The Northern Illinois Junior Angus Association finally took first in the contest.

“It was a humbling experience knowing that a goal I had dreamed was possible and even accomplished,” Handsaker says. “The Angus industry has shown me that as long as you’re willing to work hard and be committed to something, you can accomplish anything.”

It is this mentality that has pushed Handsaker to build up his small herd of cattle to be competitive on a state and national level. A selection system based on technology and common sense, Handsaker bred and raised the Fourth Overall Land of Lincoln Steer at the 2015 Illinois State Fair.

"It was an honor I had only dreamed about," Handsaker says. "Showing in front of so many people in the coliseum on such a big stage was a quite a thrill, it was one of the highlights of my life."

As one of the first members in the newly reformed Northern Illinois Junior Angus Association, Handsaker has served on the board of directors or as an officer since 2013. Also a member of the Illinois Junior Angus Association, he was the secretary for the association's field day.

Casper College in Wyoming is where Handsaker can be found, pursuing a degree in ranch management while increasing his livestock judging experience. He plans to transfer to either Kansas State or Oklahoma State University after two years to finish his degree and judging career.

"After college I would like to obtain a key position with an Angus operation," Handsaker says. "I have always wanted to be a herdsman. I feel it would be a great use of my knowledge, and I could be an effective leader at the same time."

The doors and opportunities presented to Handsaker by the NJAA and his state association inspire him to provide the same unique experiences and mentorship to youth, now and in the future.

"I would like to be able to watch not only the cattle succeed, but the kids be as successful as they can," Handsaker says. "Without the NJAA,

I don't believe my dreams and goals would be even relatively close to what they are today."

The Auxiliary awarded Handsaker the fourth-place scholarship that comes with \$1,600.

Ryland McCormick

Ryland McCormick has attended every single Angus show in Iowa since his parents, Chris and Dixie



*Ryland McCormick
fifth place*

McCormick, became the advisors for the Iowa Junior Angus Association. The Pleasantville, Iowa, native began working behind the scenes of the organization, pushing younger members to lead in various roles.

"Despite not holding offices in my state association, I believe I act as an unofficial leader with my fellow juniors," McCormick says. "I know how hard it is to be the youngest kid in a group, so I have helped new junior members feel at home in the association by socializing with them and introducing them to others."

Modeling a quiet leadership style, McCormick uses his hard-earned work ethic to make a difference in his state association and community. From helping in the nursery at Celebrate Community Church to cleaning up his local fairgrounds and giving tours of a livestock farm for his FFA chapter, McCormick keeps busy through various organizations.

"My hometown is very small. There is rarely an opportunity to make new friends, since I have known everyone since I was a child," McCormick explains. "At nationals, there are

more than triple the amount of people who live in my town, and all of them are around my age."

McCormick's favorite part of being in the NJAA is the ability to meet new people.

"I did not talk much as a child and definitely did not enjoy meeting new people," McCormick says. "Other junior members talked to me and took me under their wing. As I have gotten older, I have made it my duty to do the same thing for others who are shy or nervous."

These friendships bud into life-long relationships, and McCormick takes the opportunity to encourage other juniors to get involved in contests and conferences on the state and national level.

"National shows and other Angus events like Raising the Bar Conference have introduced me to more of the cattle industry," McCormick says. Seeing operations such as feedlots, cattle-based companies like Trans Ova Genetics, and Angus ranches in various parts of the country made me love this industry."

This NJAA involvement influenced McCormick to attend Iowa State University in pursuit of an animal science degree with plans to work with animals in some form in the future. No matter the career he chooses, advocating for the industry will be at the forefront of everything he does.

"I believe being involved is one of the most important things a person can do," McCormick says. "I hope to travel, meeting with producers in and out of the country to hear their stories. I want to see everything I possibly can in the industry and how people around the world help feed the globe." 🌍