

2021

NATIONAL JUNIOR ANGUS SHOW

The Grandest Show

In the Spotlight

Exceptional members of the National Junior Angus Association are awarded with scholarships by the American Angus Auxiliary.

Compiled by Megan Silveira, assistant editor

Since the first spotlight was pointed toward a stage, bright beams have been used to highlight outstanding individuals, separating them from the masses. Although, in the Angus industry, it seems that the best of the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) is found in members who don't need the spotlight to feel like they've succeeded.

For more than 50 years, the American Angus Auxiliary has placed a spotlight on members who don't feel that they need recognition but deserve it, nonetheless. The Auxiliary has awarded thousands of dollars in scholarships to these worthy young cattle producers.

Five female and five male recipients are chosen and ranked, with the scholarship pool divided amongst them based on their individual placings. NJAA members must be nominated for recognition by their state or regional association the spring preceding their freshman year of college. This year's winners

were announced during the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS).

Five cattlemen selected by the Auxiliary during this application process are entered into the race for the title of Miss American Angus. The newest Angus royalty

will be crowned at the annual Angus Convention in November. Miss American Angus contestants are Amelia Miller, Gridley, Ill.; Jonwyn Ayres, Rogue River, Ore.; Rachel Smith, Osceola, Neb.; Elizabeth Rone, Courtland, Miss.; and Mary Wood, Willow Spring, N.C.



PHOTO BY PEARL'S PICS, COURTESY OF THE AMERICAN ANGUS ASSOCIATION

These young ladies were announced as the Miss American Angus contestants at the 2021 National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) Awards Ceremony, July 10-17 in Grand Island, Neb. Pictured from left are Mary Wood, Willow Spring, N.C.; Amelia Miller, Gridley Ill.; Elizabeth Rone, Courtland, Miss.; and Rachel Smith, Osceola, Neb.





Amelia Miller

Hometown: Gridley, Ill.

Parents: Alan and Theresa Miller

High School: El Paso Gridley High School

College: Texas A&M University

NJAA Tenure: 17 years

"When I was 3 years old, at my third National Junior Angus Show (NJAS), I spent much of my time at the show shadowing Miss American Angus around the fairgrounds," says Amelia Miller. "In my mind, she was a superstar. This was when my adoration for the American Angus Association, as well as agriculture advocacy, sparked."

From that moment, Miller's love and devotion to the Business Breed has only grown. An active member of the NJAA and the Illinois Junior Angus Association (IJAA),

Her attitude of service stretches beyond the cattle industry. The 18-year-old is involved in several extracurricular organizations and activities, including choir groups, cheerleading, cross country, FFA and 4-H.

At the end of the day, however, Miller's biggest love lies in the Angus breed. Her family owns a herd of 300 head, and she has been able to help market their bulls, cows, embryos and seedstock calves to a variety of customers, the starting point for her love of interacting with cattlemen.

"My involvement in the NJAA is what

Miller has served her state in multiple roles and competed alongside her fellow Angus breeders on a national level.

began to spark my interest in agriculture and advocacy," she adds. "The association has allowed me to be comfortable with public speaking and has opened my eyes to how little exposure the world has to something that is very dear to my heart and my family's livelihood."

Miller's current career goals include attending Texas A&M University before advocating for the industry as an agricultural lawyer. She says she will continue to raise Angus cattle and be involved in the Association for many years to come.

Reflecting on her first encounter with the "superstar" in a sash and crown, Miller hopes to find her own path wearing the red coat. The Auxiliary offers Miller a \$2,000 scholarship and the opportunity to make this dream a reality as she competes for the title of Miss American Angus.



Jonwyn Ayres

Hometown: Rogue River, Ore.

Parents: Tom and Cara Pascalar Ayres

High School: Rogue River High School

College: Black Hawk College

NJAA Tenure: 18 years

Jonwyn Ayres is no stranger to acts of service or leadership positions. Her past is spotted with participation in 4-H and FFA events, interactions with exchange students, games with her basketball team, and involvement at the state level through the Oregon Farm Bureau.

While each of Ayres' accomplishments are noteworthy, she finds her biggest blessings come through the beef industry.

"Simply put, my life has always revolved

privilege to work with every day."

The time she pours into her herd at home helps her find success at shows across the nation. Ayres takes every opportunity she can to showcase her herd. The devotion to advocacy this NJAA and Oregon Junior Angus Association (OJAA) member has goes a step further, as she consistently looks for ways to converse with consumers or schoolmates about the beef industry.

She says she has known since she was

around Angus cattle," the 18-year-old says. "My mindset and outlook on life is all because of the jet-black beautiful Angus cows I have the

very young that the agriculture industry was the area she would call home — even in a career sense. Ayres is planning to pursue a law degree and serve as an agriculture attorney. She hopes to focus on labeling laws, land disputes and environmental policies.

Until then, however, this junior has other big plans. With her roots planted firmly in the Angus family, she dreams of wearing the crown and sash while continuing to educate others about the Business Breed and the cattle industry.

"The leadership position I have always dreamt of holding is that of Miss American Angus," Ayres says. "I have something to offer, and that is my ability to be real, to connect, to support others and to be an advocate for beef."

Ayres is presented a \$1,900 scholarship from the Auxiliary and the chance to chase her dream of the Miss American Angus title.

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Rachel Smith

Hometown: Osceola, Neb.

Parents: Allen and Heather Smith

High School: Cross County Community

College: Hastings College

NJAA Tenure: 11 years

"I believe that the largest contribution and impact I have made to help these associations is by not only being actively involved, but also having a strong sense of integrity," says Rachel Smith, active member of the NJAA and the Nebraska Junior Angus Association.

As a part of countless state and national committees within the Angus breed, this 18-year-old thrives when she is surrounded with her fellow livestock enthusiasts and connecting with them on a personal level. She believes relationships are the foundation

her local FFA and Beef Boosters, honor societies, and choir and band groups. While her calendar remains busy, Smith says she enjoys the challenge of raising livestock.

"There is no such thing as a typical day when raising livestock, as there is always a new puzzle to solve," Smith explains. "Whether that puzzle involves figuring out the dosage to treat a calf or creating a proper feed ration, my problem-solving skills are always coming in handy."

In all her work as herd manager, Smith's

of organizations within the Business Breed.

Smith is also involved in the Nebraska Cattlemen's Association,

biggest takeaway has been the importance of dedication. She values doing things right in the barn, but also places an emphasis on remaining studious. The greatest rewards come from balancing the work involved in each of Smith's hobbies.

With plans to attend Hastings College, Smith's career goals center around graphic design, marketing and agriculture. Through it all, she is also eager to continue giving back to the cattle industry, taking her turn as a part of the community that helped build her.

To help achieve her personal mission of sharing the story of the Angus family, Smith is offered the opportunity to run for Miss American Angus and a scholarship of \$1,800 by the Auxiliary.



Lexi Knapp

Hometown: Bloomfield, Iowa

Parents: Brian and Karla Knapp

High School: Davis County High School

College: Indian Hills Community College

NJAA Tenure: 10 years

Six o'clock each morning, Lexi Knapp finds herself out in one of her favorite locations on her family's cattle operation — surrounded by their seedstock females. Typical work for the 18-year-old includes rounding up heifers, dishing out feed rations and working hair.

"I have learned it is critical to be consistent and diligent when handling cattle," she explains. "The cattle have taught me how to feed and work with animals properly, but they have also taught me so much more about life."

In these organizations, Knapp has found a passion for encouraging her peers to become further involved in the industry.

Having already served as Miss Iowa Angus, Knapp knows what it takes to build self-confidence in fellow NJAA members or what words best serve to help a younger struggling showman.

"My goal is to be an approachable and relatable role model that leaves kids with the drive to come back to this great association," she says of her time serving her home state.

The seedstock industry introduced Knapp to the NJAA and the Iowa Junior Angus Association.

This goal has grown for Knapp, and she has aspirations of serving one day on the National Junior Angus Board of Directors (NJAB).

Knapp also has an impressive list of various school and community groups she works with when she isn't on the other end of a show heifer's halter. National Honor Societies, Pioneer Club, Feeding America, local 4-H and FFA chapters, and the Iowa Cattleman's Association are just a few groups to which Knapp has devoted her time.

Future plans for the Angus breeder include attending Indian Hills Community College. She hopes to consistently stay involved in the Angus industry as she grows older, and she hopes to raise her own children around the black-hided livestock.

A \$1,700 scholarship and the chance to pursue the crown of Miss American Angus are presented to Knapp by the Auxiliary.



Jordyn Wickard

Hometown: Greenfield, Ind.

Parents: Chris and Julia Wickard

High School: Eastern Hancock High School

College: Purdue University

NJAA Tenure: 10 years

As an active member of the NJAA and the Indiana Junior Angus Association, Jordyn Wickard has clocked quite a bit of time in the show ring. For this 18-year-old, however, the best work is done outside the show barn.

"At all Angus meetings and events, I do my part to talk with all members — both younger and older," she says. "This communication requires me to be intentional with my actions and words. I am the person you will find reaching out to those kids in the corner of the

room who don't seem to connect with others, and I do my best to bring them into the activity or conversation that is being held."

Wickard's

involvement in her local 4-H and FFA chapters played a large role in helping her know how to approach quieter, shyer individuals. No matter what organization she's representing or leadership position she's holding, Wickard says she wants everyone to feel included.

From the gritty work of cleaning pens at her family's operation to the challenge of exhibiting animals at the highest caliber,

Wickard has experienced many segments of the production chain of the beef industry.

Wickard likes to focus on positivity and consistently strives to be the change she wishes to see in the world. She enjoys setting high goals for herself and standing up for what she believes in.

In addition to planning to attend Purdue University, Wickard intends to run for the NJAB. However, her Angus aspirations don't stop there.

"I boldly desire to serve as Miss American Angus — the role model for not only the Angus breed, but also for the next generation of young leaders and farmers," she says.

Wickard is receiving a scholarship of \$1,600 from the Auxiliary and the opportunity to run for the honor of wearing the red jacket.



Ryan Borer

Hometown: Buchanan, Va.

Parents: John and Ginger Borer

High School: James River High School

College: Hutchinson Community College

NJAA Tenure: 7 years

A typical day for Ryan Borer consists of morning walks through the pasture to check cow-calf pairs and the distribution of specific feed rations to segmented groups of cattle.

"Learning to appreciate life and all it has to offer is something I often reflect on as I view the cows caring for their calves as they thrive each and every day," the 18-year-old says of his schedule. His days are consistent as the manager of a small Angus herd.

Borer's family was tied to the equine, sheep and swine industries, but it was

not until Borer reached the age of 11 that they all experienced the Business Breed for the first time.

Since joining both the Virginia Junior Angus

Association (VJAA) and the NJAA, Borer has had ample opportunity to familiarize himself with the opportunities members of all ages are presented thanks to the Angus breed.

Nowadays, Borer's Angus résumé includes various leadership positions with the VJAA, titles at various shows across the nation, and participation in several NJAS contests.

"I find it easy to develop a relationship with others, and I focus that skill on new members who may gain from my experience

and knowledge," he says. "Being a good role model and showing commitment to our Association is a top priority for me."

Outside of the Angus breed, Borer expresses the same dedication to his community. An active member of 4-H and FFA, his local basketball team and several honor societies, Borer has found numerous ways to be involved in his community.

In the fall, Borer will attend the school of agriculture science at Hutchinson Community College, with hopes of further pursuing a degree in veterinary medicine, specializing in large animals.

For his accomplishments as an Angus breeder and his devotion to education and leadership, the Auxiliary is awarding Borer a scholarship worth \$2,000.

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Jayce Dickerson

Hometown: Paradise, Kan.

Parents: David and Stephanie Dickerson

High School: Natoma High School

College: Butler County Community College

NJAA Tenure: 14 years

"When I am not in the pasture or the swather, I am either selecting or working to prepare the top end of my personal bred-and-owned herd to show at state and national shows," says Jayce Dickerson. "Getting up early before school to feed my show cattle, rinsing and working hair every day in the warmer months, operating a swather until the job gets done, and waiting to turn out show cattle until after dark in the summer have all contributed to learning responsibility, and that success is only accomplished with hard work."

insemination (AI) and embryo transfer (ET), Dickerson has been able to increase the marketability of his calves.

He says in addition to the joy he feels with helping hands-on at the ranch, he truly enjoys watching his livestock achieve success in the show ring — for both himself and his customers.

Dickerson plays a role in each step of production for his herd. From the hay he helps to seed and harvest that is later fed to his cattle, to the bull sale books he helps develop and advertise, Dickerson is a well-

The 18-year-old expresses knowledge and interest in promoting progress within the Angus breed. Through the use of artificial

rounded representative of the Angus breed.

When he isn't home on the ranch, Dickerson can be found pushing himself in his high school classes, serving in leadership roles at his local FFA chapter and the Kansas Junior Angus Association (KJAA), or helping to mentor younger agriculturists.

Ultimately, Dickerson will obtain a degree in animal science at Butler County Community College before furthering his education at either Kansas State University or Fort Hays State University. He eventually plans on returning home to help his family ranch continue to succeed.

"I would be the sixth generation of my family to work and harvest the land," he explains. "I take great pride in continuing that legacy."

To help him continue to push the Angus breed forward and grow the family operation, the Auxiliary offers Dickerson a scholarship of \$1,900.



Jeremiah Steph

Hometown: Tatum, Texas

Parents: Chris and Melissa Steph

High School: Beckville High School

College: Texas Tech University

NJAA Tenure: 8 years

Within the confines of his home state, Jeremiah Steph has made quite the splash in the livestock industry. This 19-year-old's competitive nature has led him to compete in various contests and cattle shows at a national level as well.

The young cattlemen lists timeliness, preparedness and perseverance as the three most important lessons time around the Business Breed has taught him.

An active member of both the NJAA and the Texas Junior Angus Association (TJAA),

Association not only helped him find his voice as a leader, but also cultivated his desire to help push others toward success.

"I have been a class president, FFA chapter vice president, athletics' captain and held multiple other leadership positions within my school. I have served the TJAA as a state officer for three years and as a director to the association for eight years," he says. "I attribute these accomplishments and my service of giving back to others to my roots watching and learning from the Angus associations."

Steph has found himself in several leadership positions since he purchased his first animal.

He says the

While Steph may be hustling to keep up with his own plans, he says he wouldn't have it any other way. His future includes pursuing a degree in agriculture at Texas Tech University and continuing to advocate for the Angus breed as long as he can.

"One person's potential for success in any field is unlimited if they are truly committed to that field or subject, and commitment to the Angus breed is exactly what I bring to the table," Steph says. "I believe the only way to truly reach one's unlimited potential is to pour back into those who have poured into you and to be truly dedicated to your walk of life."

To help him on this walk of life, the Auxiliary awards Steph a scholarship of \$1,800.



Jack Dameron

Hometown: Towanda, Ill.
Parents: Jeffrey and Jennifer Dameron
High School: University High School
College: University of Illinois or
 Oklahoma State University
NJAA Tenure: 8 years

"Initially, when I first became an active member with the NJAA, I was quite nervous," admits Jack Dameron. "This Association has helped me get out of my shell and allowed me to take advantage of different skills and opportunities that I would have never accessed before."

The 19-year-old has been able to travel on a national level, shake hands with Angus breeders with varying backgrounds and experiences, and participate in numerous contests and events presented by the

Association. He lists both self-confidence and communication abilities as skills that have grown during his tenure as an Angus breeder.

As Dameron watched these changes occur in himself, he was eager to become more involved with both the cattle industry and his local community. High school football and baseball teams, food banks, the Lutheran Church and the National Honor Society are all groups where Dameron's name is listed amongst the ranks.

The cattle industry has always been a large part of his life, with Dameron being active in both the Angus and Simmental breeds. He has achieved several national

titles in the show ring, and served his state breed associations in roles such as reporter and junior finance chairman.

Future plans for this Angus junior include pursuit of an agribusiness degree with the potential opportunity to find a career in the agriculture or healthcare industries. His parents' own career choices have helped to inspire this future.

"No matter which career path I ultimately choose, I would never be away from my IJAA and NJAA roots," Dameron says. "I plan to remain involved in our family farm, continue to participate in our state Angus association and the American Angus Association, and hope to be able to be active with our juniors in their association."

The Auxiliary offers Dameron a scholarship of \$1,700 to help him achieve these dreams and continue to positively represent the Angus breed.



Isaac Rhode

Hometown: Stewartsville, Mo.
Parents: Jeff and Susan Rhode
High School: East Buchanan High School
College: University of Missouri-Columbia
NJAA Tenure: 18 years

Isaac Rhode has exhibited a dedication to giving back to the Business Breed since he first entered the cattle industry. As a member of the NJAA and the Missouri Junior Angus Association (MJAA), the 18-year-old consistently does what he can to both serve and represent the cattle industry.

His involvements and achievements are grounded in groups like his local 4-H and FFA chapters, the Missouri Department of Agriculture, Missouri Junior Cattlemen's Association, local sports team, honors societies, and church groups.

While Rhode may play a role in many different organizations, he says it's his family and his cattle that most closely align with his passion.

"I work side by side with my parents and younger brother on our small purebred beef cattle operation in northwest Missouri every day," he says. "Working each day with my Angus herd has helped me build self-confidence and prepared me for life outside my family and our farm when I attend college and afterward."

Rhode's responsibilities on the operation have grown as he has gotten older. In addition to daily chores of feeding cows and repairing fences, he now fills a leadership role when working cattle. Rhode helps to

manage vaccinations and parasite control in the herd and handles herd synchronization for AI.

With a mind for marketing and advocacy, Rhode also sells freezer meat from his FFA project steers after the show season.

Thanks to his upbringing in the industry, Rhode has plans to continue to be involved in the cattle industry. He will obtain an animal science degree from the University of Missouri-Columbia before working in the realm of agricultural sales and management.

"Because I plan to work and be personally involved in agriculture, promoting our industry and educating those that are not involved in the work that farmers and ranchers do every day will be important to my life in many ways," Rhode explains.

The Auxiliary is awarding Rhode with a \$1,600 scholarship.