

INDUSTRY STANDOUTS

Ten outstanding individuals receive scholarships from the American Angus Auxiliary.

by Megan Silveira, associate editor

While this summer featured a Showdown in Madtown, juniors dedicated to the success of the Angus breed don't limit their involvement in the industry to one week of the year. This year, 10 individuals stood out from their peers for their positive attitudes and devotion to helping promote the breed to new heights.

For more than 50 years, the American Angus Auxiliary has recognized these outstanding junior members with the American Angus Auxiliary Scholarship. The Auxiliary

has awarded thousands of dollars in scholarships to this year's standout National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) members.

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

Five cattlemen are also selected

by the Auxiliary during this application process to be entered into the race for the title of Miss American Angus. The newest woman to wear the red coat will be crowned at the annual Angus Convention in November.

The contestants for the 2024-2025 Miss American Angus title are Ella Coulter, Wentzville, Mo.; Erin Driscoll, Williamsburg, Iowa; Rosalind Kidwell, Gentryville, Ind.; Kaylan Kiser, Proctor, Texas; and Cora Sullivan, Lawton, Okla.



Rosalind Kidwell

HOMETOWN: GENTRYVILLE, IND.

PARENTS: JUDSON AND CARLA KIDWELL

HIGH SCHOOL: BOONEVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

COLLEGE: PURDUE UNIVERSITY WEST LAFAYETTE

NJAA TENURE: 10 YEARS



Rosalind Kidwell might not have spent her childhood on a farm with a large herd, but her ties to the Angus breed run four generations deep. Her family tree also boasts faces familiar to the breed. Her great-grandmother and

grandmother served as Indiana Angus Auxiliary presidents. Kidwell herself is one of three women to serve as Indiana Angus Queen.

"The Angus breed and the NJAA has always had a strong presence in my life," she says, "and it will for many years."

Even before she wore the crown for the first time, Kidwell admits she's "always loved to talk." From friends and family to strangers, the junior hasn't ever had a hard time starting a conversation.

Being effective in conversation, however, is a skill she attributes to involvement in the NJAA.

"I first started with the extemporaneous and prepared public speaking contests. Researching and constructing speeches in a way that was meaningful became a skill that I acquired for the goal of being an effective communicator," she explains. "I also began to take on more dynamic leadership roles within the Indiana Junior Angus Association. These roles became the place for me to implement

my new communication skills, especially when speaking to adult advisors about business within our organization."

Mentorship is another passion of Kidwell's. She looks to combine both loves if she's given the opportunity to wear a prestigious red coat.

"Getting the opportunity to represent the American Angus Auxiliary as well as the Angus breed itself as Miss American Angus would be an honor," Kidwell says.

Her goals extend beyond her junior career, too. Kidwell will attend Purdue University this fall to study biochemistry with a minor in animal science. After obtaining a doctorate, she looks forward to conducting genetics research that could benefit the entire beef industry.

To help make this dream a reality, the Auxiliary awards her a \$2,200 scholarship and the opportunity to wear the sash of Miss American Angus. ★



Audrey Curtin

HOMETOWN: BLUE MOUND, ILL.

PARENTS: TJ AND MEGAN CURTIN

HIGH SCHOOL: TAYLORVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

COLLEGE: BUTLER COMMUNITY COLLEGE

NJAA TENURE: 8 YEARS



Looking at a map, Audrey Curtin has friends from coast to coast. California to New York and

Oregon to Georgia, Curtin credits the NJAA with giving her a diverse friend group. These friends have stood by her side and watched her grow.

Since those early years in the Angus business, Curtin has been nationally recognized as a competitor in livestock judging (her first competition was the National Junior Angus Show [NJAS] hosted in Des Moines, Iowa) and has started her own small business, Mound Jewelry Co.

NJAA contests and events have allowed her to overcome any nerves that come with public speaking and develop the hard skills needed to make her mark on the world.

"I am forever grateful to be a part of such an educational and rewarding industry," she says. "Raising and showing Angus cattle has taught me responsibility and how to maintain animal welfare, how to manage resources efficiently and adapt to unexpected situations with

problem-solving techniques."

Her go-getter attitude, however, isn't the only skill she's gained as a cattlemoman.

"My patience and resilience has been tested throughout my years of showing Angus cattle competitively," Curtin explains. "Furthermore, working with cattle requires collaboration and clear communication. Communication and networking are essential to any field of work or study and can be utilized even in everyday life."

As she looks towards her future, Curtin has the bar set high for herself. She has ambitions to serve as president of her state junior Angus association and run for the National Junior Angus Board. She's headed to junior college to judge and study ag business and marketing, a degree that will further her journey as a silversmith and business owner.

Curtin receives a \$2,100 scholarship from the Auxiliary. ★



Kaylan Kiser

HOMETOWN: PROCTOR, TEXAS

PARENTS: AARON AND KRYSTAL KISER

HIGH SCHOOL: WHITE HORSE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

COLLEGE: TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

NJAA TENURE: 11 YEARS



Kaylan Kiser says she can't remember a time when she wasn't participating in NJAA events in one way or another. From conferences to cattle shows and even educational workshops, Kiser says she's spent her childhood growing as an individual.

"Whether in business, education or personal relationships, the lessons learned in the cattle industry can serve as a foundation for growth and achievement in any field," she says.

While life on a farm or ranch might not be easy, Kiser says the rewards can be great when the proper effort is put in. She names adaptability, perseverance and collaboration as a few of the skills she's picked up during her time in the industry.

Time in the NJAA has proven to do more than just provide soft skills, however. Kiser says the livestock she has always been surrounded by have inspired her to pursue an animal science degree at Texas Tech University.

"The cattle industry is a complex and dynamic sector that requires much knowledge, skill and hard work to succeed," the Texas cattlemoman explains. "As someone involved in this industry, I have learned various lessons that can be applied to other aspects of life outside agriculture."

She's prioritized hands-on experience the

past few years, seeking out opportunities to engage with professionals in the field and interact with producers themselves.

"The main objective of my animal science degree is to understand animal biology, behavior, genetics, health, nutrition and reproduction. I strive to establish a strong foundation in these various aspects of animal sciences," Kiser adds.

The junior hopes to one day serve in the cattle industry as a bovine embryologist.

"I envision myself being involved in the day-to-day operations of an embryologist. These operations include artificial insemination, conventional flushing, embryo transplants and *in vitro* fertilization," Kiser says. "My goal is to provide reproductive services to help cattlemen improve their herds and be more successful."

For all she's done in the industry thus far, Kiser is awarded a \$2,000 scholarship from the Auxiliary and has a chance to win the title of Miss American Angus. ★

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Ella Coulter

HOMETOWN: WENTZVILLE, MO.

PARENTS: MATT AND KATI COULTER

HIGH SCHOOL: FRANCIS HOWELL HIGH SCHOOL

COLLEGE: KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

NJAA TENURE: 6 YEARS



"Some leaders are born, others are made. I am not sure which I am, but I do feel that I have been raised with the qualities of a leader," says Ella Coulter.

Beyond her education and sports teams,

the Missourian explains her state junior Angus association and the NJAA have instilled those qualities within her.

Though her résumé today boasts involvement in the Missouri Junior Angus Association (MJAA) team sales group, the crown of Missouri Angus Queen, and attendance at events like the Leaders Engaged in Angus Development (LEAD) and Raising the Bar conferences, Coulter says she hasn't always been confident in herself.

"As a young member of the association, I was shy and hesitant to become involved with a new group of people," she explains, noting the statement rang true in more than just the show ring. "It was a slow start, but I became more confident each year, gaining experience showing my cattle and making friends with other members."

Coulter's learned to exemplify the traits she values in her own mentors: an honest spirit, pride in advocacy, a listening ear.

"The daily tasks that seem mundane teach

us work ethic and determination," she says of life on a cattle operation. "The days working cattle teach us when to be gentle and when to be firm. The days in the barn teach us about life and death. These are values that cannot be taught anywhere else."

Despite the personal growth, Coulter says her favorite thing about the Angus business is actually watching her younger peers discover themselves the same way she did.

"Seeing new members try something for the first time and interacting with fellow junior Angus members and starting friendships that can last a lifetime is one of the most rewarding things I have the privilege to be a part of," Coulter adds.

Her college plans will take her to Manhattan, Kan., to study animal science with a pre-vet concentration. She hopes to turn a lifelong love into a career as a large-animal veterinarian.

To help her pursue these dreams, she is offered a \$1,900 scholarship from the Auxiliary. ★



Anne Geddes

HOMETOWN: CONWELL, WASH.

PARENTS: KELLIE AND BENJAMIN GEDDES

HIGH SCHOOL: CONNELL HIGH SCHOOL

COLLEGE: UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO

NJAA TENURE: 14 YEARS



Anne Geddes firmly believes the involvement of new, young participants in the Angus industry is the key to ensuring its long-term success. To help promote that ongoing enthusiasm, this Washington junior has taken

it upon herself to help advocate for the breed and its many programs.

"I've taken the initiative to reach out to youth outside of the Angus industry," Geddes explains. "I have passionately discussed and showcased the wide array of advantages and opportunities that come with being a part of the Angus association, particularly focusing on the educational experiences and invaluable learning resources available to young members."

It ties into her belief that one of the biggest challenges facing the agriculture industry is lack of understanding and awareness, present especially in Geddes' own generation. Growing up in a rural community, she says she could see the disconnect between her community and the farms and ranches that helped feed them.

She knows addressing this challenge requires proactive efforts. Thanks to her upbringing in *The Business Breed*,

she's equipped with the confidence and communication skills to help bridge that gap.

"Participating in activities within the NJAA, especially the mentorship program, taught me the importance of stepping up and confidently engaging with others," Geddes says, "whether it's in a one-on-one setting or addressing a large audience."

Nowadays, the young cattlegirl is a self-proclaimed social butterfly, eager to connect with new people and network with all who she encounters.

As she graduates high school, Geddes is headed to the University of Idaho to get her degree in animal science, specializing in large-animal nutrition. Having grown up around horses and cattle, she's eager to find a career where she can use nutrition to help animals perform to peak levels.

To help her on her educational journey, the Auxiliary awards Geddes an \$1,800 scholarship. ★



Drew Mickey

HOMETOWN: TAYLORVILLE, IND.

PARENTS: JON AND CARLA MICKEY

HIGH SCHOOL: TAYLORVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

COLLEGE: KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

NJAA TENURE: 8 YEARS



Ten years ago, Drew Mickey's life was changed forever.

"I remember watching the truck pull in with our first group of Angus cattle that we had purchased in Iowa," he recalls. "Even on that day, as an 8-year-old boy, I was taught the

values of a strong work ethic by assisting with the cattle operation."

Today the fifth-generation cattleman owns 17 registered head, offering their progeny to commercial cattlemen in the Midwest.

"Though the marketing of my cattle, I have been able to enhance other herds with my genetics and have made an impact by spreading my brand," Mickey explains. "I have maintained my strong level of dedication to our cattle operation, but I have expanded my roles on the farm, which has transformed me as an individual and made me a better version of myself."

But it's not just sales that drive the young breeder's ambitions. He has competed in numerous contests at the NJAS, shown across the country, and been active in his state beef associations and local 4-H and FFA chapters.

Late nights and early mornings in the barn are dedicated to chores. Helping cows calve out, halter-breaking heifers, chatting with customers — Mickey is there in every step of

the process. In between all that's required to keep a farm running, Mickey's also picked up a new talent.

"Nearly five years after becoming involved in the Angus breed, I heard the NJAA started an auctioneering contest at the National Junior Angus Show," he says, noting he'd always been enamored by the chant from the block on sale day.

He placed second in that inaugural contest, and has since graduated from the Western College of Auctioneering, even starting DT Auction Service. He'll couple that skill with a major in animal science and minor in agricultural communications.

Mickey's got big plans, plans that include completing a master's program and a future career in the meat science industry. He promises no matter where life takes him, he aims to have a positive effect on the agriculture industry through his future research.

Mickey is offered \$2,200 from the Auxiliary to make his dreams a reality. ★



Lyle Perrier

HOMETOWN: EUREKA, KAN.

PARENTS: MATT AND AMY PERRIER

HIGH SCHOOL: EUREKA HIGH SCHOOL

COLLEGE: KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

NJAA TENURE: 7 YEARS



Lyle Perrier attributes the bulk of his experiences, knowledges and relationships to his involvement in the cattle industry. As an Angus breeder, he's met countless others who

share his passion for livestock, has risen to the call of leadership in various positions and learned to think critically when faced with difficult tasks.

"Agriculture does a phenomenal job of cultivating its members to be hardworking, confident and passionate individuals," the Kansas native says. "I feel that all these skills together can be summarized into one phrase, and that is 'well-rounded.' Although a vague term, it is very descriptive of the average young person in the agriculture industry."

Teamwork is one of the biggest takeaways from Perrier's junior career. Whether it be his siblings, fellow showmen or even the animal at the other end of the halter, there's no room for "I" in the show world.

Perrier also notes the importance of patience. It's a trait he admits doesn't come naturally, but the NJAA has stressed its value.

"I have worked very hard towards getting better at this specific skill over the years," he

explains. "Thankfully the natural requirements of raising and showing livestock, and especially cattle, require you to be very patient."

From show day to the nine-month gestation period of cows, Perrier says there's a lot of time that has to pass before progress as a cattle producer can be noted.

The junior knows these and other skills will come in handy when he heads to Kansas State University. After completing his studies in animal science, he sees himself entering a career in the beef industry but hopes to return to Eureka to the family operation.

"I also hope to continue to increase the size of our operation while keeping the intense and steadfast breeding philosophy in place," Perrier adds. "If I am to return home, a goal of mine is to bring a new profit center into the family's operation to allow any of my siblings that would like to return home to do so."

Perrier receives a \$2,100 scholarship. ★

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Jacob Wickard

HOMETOWN: GREENFIELD, IND.

PARENTS: CHRIS AND JULIE WICKARD

HIGH SCHOOL: EASTERN HANCOCK HIGH SCHOOL

COLLEGE: PURDUE UNIVERSITY WEST LAFAYETTE

NJAA TENURE: 17 YEARS



For many, a brand is synonymous with an animal's hide. In these recent years of his NJAA career, Jacob Wickard says he's discovered a new meaning for the common industry term. Now more than ever before, he's focused on

building his own brand.

"I have learned from the shows, banquets and conferences I have attended that building your own foundation is vital when applying for jobs and meeting others," he explains. "Advocating for myself is something I have learned from the [American] Angus Association because it is vital to ensure your first impression is a bold one."

In a technology-driven world, Wickard knows these initial meetings can happen via social media or face to face. But that's a truth that ties in well to a lesson his parents have taught him: always do the right thing.

Whether you're shaking hands for the first time or scrolling through Facebook, Wickard says every interaction matters. He's made it his mission to be a consistent and reliable individual, but also an unwavering advocate for the agriculture industry.

Looking back on the years he's spent on the family farm, Wickard Livestock, this junior is proud of what he sees. There's quality stock in

the pasture, successful marketing endeavors across the board and relationships that will last a lifetime.

One of those relationships is especially noteworthy to Wickard — a mentee from his local 4-H chapter.

"I believe the intentional time I am spending with this younger 4-Her will make a difference in his life," Wickard explains. "I truly believe that programs like the National Junior Angus Show mentoring program have prepared me to advise others ... I believe mentorship never goes out of style, and all ages can learn from others."

Embarking on his next learning journey, Wickard heads to Purdue University in the fall of 2024. He'll join the *Alpha Gamma Rho* fraternity and major in agribusiness. He aims to return to the farm after graduation, working every day to move the Wickard herd forward as well as propel the entire industry to new heights.

Those plans will be supported by a \$2,000 scholarship. ★



Gavin Rhode

HOMETOWN: STEWARTSVILLE, MO.

PARENTS: JEFF AND SUSAN RHODE

HIGH SCHOOL: EAST BUCHANAN C-1

COLLEGE: UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI—COLUMBIA

NJAA TENURE: 18 YEARS



"The NJAA has influenced every part of my life and my goals for the future," explains Missouri junior Gavin Rhode. "My involvement in showing Angus cattle and NJAA leadership

activities has broadened my view of the world and agriculture specifically."

Friendships offering diverse backgrounds have broadened his perspective, and contests like the Auxiliary-sponsored All-American Certified Angus Beef (CAB) Cook-off have helped Rhode amplify his public speaking skills. Angus has been a large part of his young adult life, but agriculture has always been in Rhode's life.

He's a fourth-generation member of the industry, on both his parents' sides of the family. At the age of 3, he earned the title of "cattleman" when he purchased his first Angus cow.

Though his involvement with the herd has always been high, it was actually a career showing barrows that led Rhode to start his own freezer meat business. Pork was sold to local customers, and he's even expanded the business to include beef from fat steers.

He says the experience has taught him a lot

about feeding animals and how to share the producer's message with consumers.

Entrepreneurial mind aside, the business reflects a core belief of the Rhode family.

"My parents have instilled the importance of servant leadership in me from a young age, and that being involved in your local community and within the industries that are important to you, your family and your business is time well spent," Rhode adds. "I feel that I have only scratched the surface of my leadership potential."

The junior plans on attending the University of Missouri—Columbia to major in agribusiness management. He hopes while in college, he'll decide whether law school or coming home to the family cattle operation will be the best fit for his future.

To support his endeavors, the Auxiliary grants Rhode a \$1,900 scholarship. ★



Adam McCauley

HOMETOWN: CYNTHIANA, KY.

PARENTS: TIMOTHY AND NELL MCCAULEY

HIGH SCHOOL: HARRISON COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

COLLEGE: UNIVERSITY OF NORTHWESTERN OHIO

NJAA TENURE: 9 YEARS



As a multigenerational member of the cattle industry, Adam McCauley knows it takes hard work, perseverance, communication and so

much more to successfully manage cattle.

"Working on a farm requires dedication, resilience and a strong work ethic to overcome challenges and achieve success," he adds. "These qualities have instilled in me the mindset to tackle obstacles head-on and persist in the face of adversity in any endeavor I pursue."

As a junior Angus breeder, there's also been the need to focus on teamwork and communication. From surrounding himself by others with similar passions, McCauley has been able to grow as an individual and inspire others to do the same.

After attending the LEAD conference in 2022, McCauley became a self-appointed ambassador for the NJAA.

"I'm committed to supporting the growth of new members and continuing my work with the KJAA (Kentucky Junior Angus Association)

and NJAA," he says. "I've actively participated in shows, contests and leadership events with the KJAA, believing firmly in the greatness of the Angus breed. My efforts have led two friends to join both state and national associations."

He's come leaps and bounds from where he started as a member of the NJAA. McCauley remembers times when he was afraid to meet new people, but he says the cattle industry has been a safe space to connect with friends, old and new.

A true testament to his dedication to the agriculture lifestyle, McCauley has aspirations of achieving a degree in diesel and agricultural technology before returning home to the family operation to aid him in farm management and equipment efficiency.

To assist him on this venture, the Auxiliary awards McCauley a scholarship of \$1,800. ★

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