

Golden in the Heartland

National Junior Recognition Program awards 24 NJAA elite with gold.

by **Paige Nelson**, editorial intern

The Gold Award is the final step in a National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) member's career. This award is given to individuals who go the extra mile to achieve success in all the opportunities the NJAA has to offer," says Jaclyn Upperman, director of events and education for the American Angus Association.

The National Junior Recognition Program (NJRP) was established more than 40 years ago, and at this year's 2014 National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) the program was proud to award 24 NJAA members with Gold Awards.

Points are earned through participation in various junior activities, including Association activities, competitive activities, performance

testing, production and merchandising of Angus genetics, and other relevant beef industry activities. To qualify for Gold, members must first earn the Bronze Award, achieved by amassing 1,000 points; the Silver Award, which requires another 1,000 points; plus an additional 1,000 for a total of 3,000 points.

The Bronze, Silver and Gold Award system was set up to provide young Angus breeders

the opportunity to become nationally recognized for continued achievement and to encourage juniors to strive for excellence. Gold Award winners are presented with a special pin cast in gold and receive national, regional and local recognition for their efforts.



Calli Bayer

Calli Bayer, the daughter of Scott and Mia Bayer of Ringle, Wis., dedicated many of her NJAA years to leadership service in her state junior association. Bayer assumed positions



Calli Bayer

of director, historian, secretary, show chair, treasurer and vice president from 2005 through 2012.

She was also the Wisconsin Junior Angus Association voting delegate at NJAS in 2009 and an

NJAS Mentoring Program participant. Her team placed first in the NJAS team fitting contest in 2012. She attended Leaders Engaged in Angus Development (LEAD) in 2009.

In 2010 Bayer had an owned heifer division winner at NJAS. At the 2013 NJAS she had a class winner and a reserve division winner in the owned heifer show. She won grand champion twice at the Wisconsin State Fair and once at the Wisconsin Angus Preview. By 2013, Bayer had four grand champion senior showmanship awards.

Bayer says of her experience, "When I think of my future, I can only believe that Angus cattle and the beef industry will be a part of it. Over my junior Angus career, I have learned many valuable life skills such as respect, dedication and leadership."

With a projected graduation date of December 2015, she is currently enrolled at

Iowa State University and working toward a bachelor's degree in agricultural communications.

Charles "Blake" Boyd

From Mayslick, Ky., Blake Boyd is a changed person after participating in NJAS.

"To see how much I've evolved from a character standpoint is amazing to me. If that isn't a true reflection of the success of this organization, then I don't know what is. The NJAA and its activities change people!" he says.



Charles "Blake" Boyd

The son of Charlie and Paula Boyd has exhibited three NJAS grand champions (2008, 2009 and 2012) and was a first-place award winner in the 2012 Auxiliary-sponsored All-American *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) Cook-Off. Boyd also served as an NJAA voting delegate and participated in the 2011 LEAD conference.

He represented the Kentucky Junior Angus Association as treasurer, second vice president and reporter. He is an American Angus Foundation, Kentucky Angus Association and Kentucky Angus Auxiliary scholarship award recipient.

Boyd is currently enrolled at Oklahoma State University and is working toward a bachelor's degree in animal science with an expected graduation date of May 2015. His plans, however, don't end there.

"My goal is to be a seedstock producer that produces bulls and females for commercial and purebred cattlemen that not only help to keep the Angus breed the most dominant breed in America, but also make a positive impact on the beef industry," says Boyd.

Cortney Bromenshenk

Cortney Bromenshenk says she wouldn't have it any other way.

"In years past, my goals were all about chasing purple banners; but now, looking back, it's the bond I made with my friends



Cortney Bromenshenk

and family that I am most thankful for. Showing has taught me some of the hardest lessons and put me through some of the biggest obstacles, which have graciously prepared me for the real world. There is

truly no other world I would have rather been raised in than the show world."

The Billings, Mont., native has represented her state as the Montana Junior Angus Association secretary, vice president and president. She was an NJAA voting delegate and an Angus Foundation scholarship recipient in 2011 and 2012.

Bromenshenk claimed grand champion bred-and-owned (B&O) carcass steer at the 2010 NJAS and the 2012 NJAS. She also performed well in showmanship contests,

placing first, reserve and grand champion in many contests.

The daughter of Paul and Brenda Bromenshenk is currently attending Oklahoma State University and is pursuing a bachelor's degree in biosystems and agriculture engineering. Her expected graduation date is the spring of 2016. She plans to research and improve plant and animal genetics, as well as improve and expand on her own herd of Angus cattle.

Ben Conner

"Raising cattle, you experience birth, death, hard work, determination, reward, responsibility, difficult situations, thinking on your feet, and the list could go on and on. At the end of the day though, you look at the cattle grazing in the pasture and think to yourself, 'I wouldn't trade it for anything else,'" reflects Ben Conner of Hodgenville, Ky.



Ben Conner

Conner currently attends the University of Kentucky and is pursuing a bachelor's degree in agriculture education. He is expected to graduate in May 2016.

Throughout his membership in NJAA, he has assumed several Kentucky Junior Angus Association positions, including director, treasurer and president. Conner exhibited in many junior Angus shows, including the NJAS; the Kentucky Angus Sweepstakes, earning grand champion; and the Kentucky Angus Preview, earning a first in class. At the Kentucky Preview Show, he earned two division championships. He also competed in the NJAS quiz bowl, team sales and photography contest, as well as the Cook-Off. At the state level, Conner took first place in the Kentucky Angus Preview judging contest in 2007 and in the Kentucky Junior Angus Preview judging contest in 2005.

The son of Kenley and Dawn Conner placed first in two local showmanship contests: the District 4-H Beef show and the LaRue County Fair.

Shelby Eidson

"My time as a junior member has been such a wonderful time. I have learned so much about myself and the things that make you a successful person, such as determination, responsibility and respect. I've also made lifelong friends that I would

have never met without being part of this amazing organization," said Shelby Eidson, the 2011 and 2012 Georgia Junior Angus Association queen.

From Arnoldsville, Ga., Eidson served as Georgia Junior Angus Association secretary in 2011 and then as president in 2012 and 2013. She attended the 2013 LEAD conference.



Shelby Eidson

At the Southern National Junior Angus Show in 2012, Eidson placed first in class with her B&O bull. She placed second with the same bull at the Southern National Open Angus Show. She placed second in showmanship at the Washington Junior Show.

The daughter of Greg and Tanya Eidson was very successful at the state level in photography. She placed first in 2011 and 2013 and second in 2012.

Eidson received her American FFA Degree at the National FFA Convention in October of 2013. She currently attends Athens Technical College and is working toward an associate degree; after which she plans to enter Piedmont College to complete her bachelor's degree in early childhood education.

Frederick Frey

A two-time Cook-Off champion, Frederick Frey II has sold steers to a restaurant in his hometown for local residents to enjoy.

Says Frey, "The NJAA helped me with my life by teaching me responsibility by caring for my animals and doing my best to be competitive, which, in turn, has helped me be more prepared for school and work." Besides participating in the



Frederick Frey

Cook-Off, Frey also competed in photography and livestock judging contests.

As an NJAA member, Frey supported his community by donating a quarter of the money he received for his Angus steer to the Quarryville Fire Co. to help them purchase safety equipment.

He saw the photo backdrop several times

in 2011, with grand champions at the Atlantic National Angus Show, Pennsylvania Breeders' Show and Lancaster County 4-H. Again in 2012, Frey showed champions in the Pennsylvania Farm Show, Pennsylvania Breeders' Show, Pennsylvania Farm Show open and junior shows, and the Mid-Atlantic Junior Angus Classic. He was also the Lancaster County 4-H showmanship champion in 2011.

The son of Fritz and Nancy Frey of Drumore, Pa., graduated from the Lancaster County CTC Diesel Tech program and Universal Technical Institute with a diesel tech certificate. He hopes to open his own diesel mechanic shop and to continue to raise and market registered-Angus cattle.

Brooke Harward

Brooke Harward, the 2012 Miss American Angus, is a graduate of North Carolina State University. Her degree was in agricultural business management and now she is employed full-time with her family's



Brooke Harward

livestock auction markets and video auction. Her parents, Marcus and Patty Harward, reside in Richfield, N.C.

Harward served as president of the North Carolina Junior Angus Association from 2010 through 2012. She also served as vice president, secretary and central director.

At the national level, Harward was a voting delegate, LEAD participant and Raising the Bar participant. She participated in the NJAS Mentoring Program in 2010, 2012 and 2013.

At NJAS, she took firsts in the Cook-Off, career development interview, photography, graphic design and video contests. Harward earned first place in showmanship at the North Carolina State Fair, North Carolina Junior Beef Round-Up and Dixie Classic. She has owned grand champions at the North Carolina State Fair, Stanly County Fair and the WNC Junior Beef Spring Fling.

"My NJAA experiences have given me countless opportunities and the confidence I needed to go out into the world and to continue my passion for Angus cattle and the beef industry," she says. Harward plans to

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help expand her family's registered-Angus herd and give back to the Angus breed.

Stephanie Hymel

The 2003 Louisiana Junior Angus Association Rookie of the Year, Stephanie Hymel is now pursuing a doctor of pharmacy degree at Xavier University of Louisiana's



Stephanie Hymel

College of Pharmacy. The Vacherie, La.,-raised NJAA member knew she wanted to participate in the NJAS ever since she watched her big sister enter the showing. In 2003 she got her chance.

After practicing with her heifer for weeks in the backyard, she thought they were ready.

"However, upon entering the ring in Louisville, [my heifer] decided the brush landscaping, as well as the green shavings, were perfect show-time snacks. As she pushed me around the ring and into the bushes several times, I became very discouraged. However, it was [at] that moment when my 'hero' in a green jacket took the halter, pushed my heifer back in line and stood in front of the bush so I could finish showing. At that moment, I realized I wanted to continue in hopes of motivating and encouraging others around me," she recalls.

Her parents, Eddie and Patti Hymel, watched their daughter represent their state as Louisiana Angus princess, then queen, as well as Louisiana Junior Angus Association secretary in 2010 and a voting delegate in 2011.

Colleen Jones

The 2007 and 2008 North Carolina Junior Angus Association Queen, Colleen Jones became part of the Angus family and says, "The NJAA has given me the opportunity to travel around the country, make friendships that will last a lifetime and be a part of the greatest breed there is."



Colleen Jones

Jones did plenty of traveling as a LEAD participant, voting delegate and state representative.

At the 2013 NJAS, she took home grand champion owned cow-calf pair and placed in the top 15 for showmanship. Her other showmanship awards include a supreme placing at the Atlantic National Junior Angus Show, and firsts at the North Carolina State Fair.

Throughout her years as a junior Angus member, Jones participated in livestock judging and the quiz bowl several times at NJAS. In 2013 she was an NJAS Mentoring Program participant.

The daughter of Randy and Beth Jones of Kinston, N.C., currently attends North Carolina State University. She is pursuing a bachelor's degree in agriculture business management and anticipates graduating in December of 2014.

Leo Kruse

The son of Terry and Allison Kruse of Rudd, Iowa, knows the stress of NJAS.

"My first junior nationals was in Tulsa, Okla., where I took a steer and a heifer. The night before I showed my steer, he got a very high temperature and was acting really sick. He got so bad that we didn't know if he was going to make it. We rubbed ice on him, and my dad stayed with him in the barn all night babysitting him," Kruse says.



Leo Kruse

"Although I wanted to stay, my parents made me go back to the hotel so I could get a good night's sleep," he continues. "I still remember my mom driving out of the fairgrounds with me crying because I thought for sure my steer wasn't going to be there when I got back in the morning. Sure enough, he pulled through, and all of the hard work paid off when he was selected as the champion steer."

Kruse served as an Iowa Junior Angus Association director from 2008 through 2011. He received an American Angus Auxiliary scholarship in 2012. At the Eastern Iowa Angus Show in 2010 Kruse took reserve champion B&O heifer.

Kruse participated in the NJAS Mentoring Program in 2007. He currently studies animal science at Iowa State University and expects to graduate in May 2016.

Mary Mardesen

Mary Mardesen served as the Iowa Junior Angus Association secretary in 2012. She is a recipient of an Angus Foundation scholarship and an Iowa Angus Auxiliary scholarship. Mardesen placed first in



Mary Mardesen

showmanship at the Iowa Junior Angus Association Preview and at the Badger Kick-off Classic.

During the 2013 NJAS, she placed in the top 15 for showmanship.

The 2011 Iowa Junior Angus

Association Queen put her title to work at her hometown's grocery store where she and her brother displayed a show heifer and handed out beef cuts posters, Angus pencils and coloring sheets.

"I felt it necessary to promote and let the city folk know where their beef comes from, how well-cared for the animals are and how they can be a driving force in helping our breed by consuming Angus beef," says Mardesen.

The daughter of Heath and Shelli Mardesen of Oxford, Iowa, currently attends Iowa State University and is working toward a bachelor's degree in business and finance. She plans to become a member of the American Angus Association and the American Angus Auxiliary. She hopes to continue purchasing Angus cattle and to raise her future children in the breed.

"When I start my own family someday, I want to raise them with the same values and opportunities the Angus breed has taught me," Mardesen says.

Daniel McFarland

With aspirations to attend medical school and become a dermatologist, Daniel McFarland is currently enrolled in the animal science/preveterinary medicine program at the University of Arkansas. He has assumed many positions, including president, in the Louisiana Junior Angus Association. From 2011 through 2013, McFarland served on the National Junior Angus Board (NJAB) as vice chairman.

McFarland is the son of Marius and Regina McFarland of Keithville, La. He attended LEAD in 2012 and 2013, as well as Raising the Bar in 2013. He has also been an

NJAA scholarship recipient.

McFarland participated in the NJAS Mentoring Program from 2011 to 2013. At the 2011 NJAS his team took first in the



Daniel McFarland

Cook-Off and third in the quiz bowl.

He showed in several different Angus shows, winning his class at the 2012 Eastern Regional Junior Angus Show and first place at the 2012 NJAS.

At the 2011 and 2012 North American International Livestock Expositions (NAILE), he placed first in the owned heifer division.

In showmanship contests McFarland didn't falter, placing first in the 2013 Eastern Regional and second in the 2013 American Royal. He also took home showmanship firsts at the 2011 North West Louisiana District Show and Louisiana State Fair, with another first in the 2010 Louisiana State Fair.

DeeAnne Merriman

The daughter of Joseph and Susan Merriman of Lowell, Mich., DeeAnne Merriman says, "My official career within the NJAA began at the age of 9. It started,



DeeAnne Merriman

though, much earlier than that, as is the case with most members, as I was born into an Angus cattle family."

Merriman participated in junior activities at the county, state and national levels,

serving as the Michigan Junior Angus Association reporter, historian and director. At the 2007 Michigan Angus Preview Show, Merriman took reserve champion in the B&O division. Her team placed first in the NJAS Cook-Off in 2011, and she participated in the 2011 NJAS Mentoring Program.

She received the National 4-H Beef Award and participated in a national 4-H livestock judging contest team and was a national 4-H Club Congress representative. Merriman was also a contestant on a national FFA judging team.

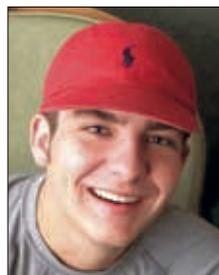
"The NJAA is an organization that allows you to grow into a responsible adult and

learn life lessons along the way and fosters friendships that will always be there in the future, if you should want to come back," Merriman says.

Merriman is attending Northwestern Michigan College and plans to graduate May 2017. She is pursuing an art appreciation degree and hopes to obtain a master's degree in art therapy.

Jordan Mullett

Jordan Mullett attended his first cattle show at 2 weeks old. His tiny body must have liked the environment, because years later he is still showing cattle. Mullett has had several class winners and a division champion while participating in the 2006, the 2010 and the 2011 NJAS. At the 2010 Eastern Regional, Mullett showed the grand champion steer.



Jordan Mullett

His showmanship awards include a

first place at the 2008 Atlantic National Angus Show and another first place at the 2012 Eastern Regional.

He served in leadership roles throughout his junior career. In 2010, Mullett was assistant treasurer for the Ohio Junior Angus Association. The following year he served as an NJAA voting delegate. He earned two NJAA scholarships and attended Raising the Bar in 2010.

Mullett participated in the NJAS Mentoring Program in 2002. His team also took first-place titles in team fitting and the quiz bowl at NJAS.

The son of Gene and Janel Mullett of Coshocton, Ohio, is currently attending Colorado State University pursuing a bachelor's degree in animal science with an expected graduation date in the spring of 2015.

"The NJAA has helped to develop my passion for the Angus industry," Mullett says.

Taylor Nichols

Growing up in the remote area of Chambers, Neb., didn't stunt Taylor Nichols' growth as an NJAA member. At the 2013 NJAS, Nichols participated in the quiz bowl and livestock judging contests. He was an active member and officer of the Prairie Wranglers 4-H club and various offices

throughout his 11-year 4-H career. He is also a graduated member of the Chambers FFA chapter. As a fourth-generation rancher, Nichols is still using his very first 4-H project



Taylor Nichols

as the cornerstone of his herd, and her sons have topped the family bull sale several times.

Reflecting on his junior career Nichols says, "I realize how many people I have met and how many

things I have experienced that I never would have if it wasn't for the NJAA."

In 2011, Nichols' heifer "Bailey" won reserve junior owned heifer at the Nebraska State Junior Show. She was acknowledged as third overall.

He is the son of David and Lynn Nichols and currently attends Chadron State College in Chadron, Neb. He is majoring in range management with a livestock emphasis. Nichols is set to graduate in May 2017 and plans to go back to the family cattle operation.

Luke Nord

The former NJAB Foundation director Luke Nord says being an NJAA member and leader has helped him in several ways.

"I have gained knowledge about Angus cattle, breeding, feeding, marketing, etc. Also,



Luke Nord

I have been in a situation to see some of the best cattle and Angus operations in the country, which has helped me set goals for my own herd," he says.

"Being able to improve my speaking skills and gaining confidence in myself has helped me be a better leader. Traveling, meeting new people and being responsible to the association has helped me grow up and learn to help younger members develop their own skills and encourage them to set achievable goals."

Nord is the son of Robert and Amber Nord of Wolverton, Minn. At the 2013 NJAS, Nord earned a division championship in the

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B&O heifer division. He also placed third in showmanship at the 2013 NJAS.

He is enrolled in an animal science bachelor's degree program at North Dakota State University. He plans to graduate in 2015.

Nord will continue to work on his family's farm and help manage the cattle operation. He says he will continue to be involved in the American Angus Association at the state and national level.

Matt Purfeerst

Matt Purfeerst learned that "practice makes perfect" while an NJAA member and says, "I also realized that dreams are possible. As a junior member, I was able to improve



Matt Purfeerst

genetics within my Angus herd and raise a national champion. I learned that with hard work, the support of family and friends, and the advice of other Angus breeders, it really can happen." The son of Jim and Deb Purfeerst of Faribault, Minn., has been involved in both his state Angus association and the NJAA. He served as the Minnesota Junior Angus Association president in 2011 and 2012. Purfeerst also represented his state association by attending the 2013 LEAD conference and served as a voting delegate at the 2013 NJAS.

He earned a division champion placing in the B&O division at the Minnesota State Fair open show.

Purfeerst's team placed second in both the 2010 and 2013 NJAS quiz bowls. He is currently a member of the South Dakota State University (SDSU) senior livestock judging team 2013-2014.

His sights are set on completing a bachelor's degree from SDSU in agriculture business and agronomy by May of 2015. He plans to return to the family farm as a fifth-generation crop and livestock-production farmer.

Cody Theis

Cody Theis was blessed to enjoy great friends while exhibiting his family's home-raised Angus cattle. Showing a grand champion at both the Eastern Regional and

the Central Regional Angus Show, Theis says, "The friendships I have made through these years will last forever. Through all the shows, LEAD and Raising the Bar conferences, I



Cody Theis

have met some of the most outgoing individuals that this world has to offer. It is an honor to be part of an association that offers so many opportunities." From Leavenworth, Kan., the son of Gerald Theis and Tina Cassella attended the 2013 Raising the Bar conference and served as the 2013-2014 Kansas Junior Angus Association vice president. He received an American Angus Auxiliary scholarship in 2012.

Theis served as president of the Happy Hollow 4-H Club from 2010 to 2012 and won the grand champion breeding beef at the Leavenworth County Fair six times.

With an expected graduation date of May 2016, Theis will complete a bachelor's degree in animal science at Kansas State University. He hopes to return to the family cattle business.

"I have a great passion for the place where I was raised, and I hope to be a part of it in the future," he says.

Jacob Steph

Currently attending Texas Tech University, Jacob Steph stayed plenty busy throughout his NJAA career and served the NJAA in many capacities. Since 2008, Steph



Jacob Steph

has held the office of Texas Junior Angus Association director, second vice president, historian, first vice president and president. Among his state responsibilities, Steph has also been an NJAA Angus Ambassador finalist, voting delegate, and a 2010 and 2013 LEAD conference attendee. He participated in the NJAS Mentoring Program in 2013.

The Tatum, Texas, native and son of Chris and Melissa Steph has also participated in contests at both the state and national levels.

At nationals he was a member of the 2012 and 2013 team sales champion teams and the state individual sales champion in 2009, 2012 and 2013. Steph also earned grand champion showmanship awards in both the Rusk County Youth and Harvest Festival Livestock Contests.

"Nothing in my life will ever take the place of the great organization that the NJAA is, and I will always have these memories branded in my mind from days as an active junior in the business breed," notes Steph.

He plans to graduate from Texas Tech in December 2014 with a bachelor's degree in animal science. After that he hopes to attain a marketing position within an agriculture-focused company while continuing to grow his Angus breeding herd.

Jena Wagner

Darryl and Kari Wagner of Billings, Mont., are the parents of the former NJAB Membership Director Jena Wagner. Wagner



Jena Wagner

says of her leadership experience, "I admire the leaders that are passionate about what they do. I look up to the leaders that are patient with the younger members. I admire the leaders who are not controlling, because nothing works the same for everyone."

Wagner also served as Montana Junior Angus Association president, vice president, reporter, queen and princess. She attended LEAD in 2012 and 2013, as well as Raising the Bar conferences from 2010 to 2012. At the 2011 NJAS, she participated in the mentoring program.

She showed the reserve champion B&O heifer at the 2013 Northern International Livestock Exposition. For many years, Wagner showed in the Montana Fair Junior Angus Show, where she won grand champion cow-calf, reserve grand champion cow-calf and several classes.

With dreams of working for the *Angus Journal's* Special Services department, she currently attends Montana State University-Billings and is pursuing a bachelor's degree in communications. Her expected graduation date is December 2015.

Cameron Ward

An Angus Foundation and NJAA scholarship recipient, Cameron Ward enrolled at Butler County Community College and graduated in May 2014. While in



Cameron Ward

school Ward studied theater and says of his membership in NJAA, “I plan to create a life for myself in the world of performing and directing, but my younger life [with] the association has given me the drive and resourcefulness to accomplish this. I am grateful to the NJAA and plan to also be its greatest advocate among the people I have come to know and love.”

The son of Jack and Mary Ann Ward of Plattsburg, Mo., took advantage of everything NJAA membership had to offer. He attended LEAD conferences in 2012 and 2013 and participated in numerous NJAS contests — Cook-Off, team sales, photography, creative writing, prepared speaking and extemporaneous speaking to name a few. He placed first on several accounts. He also participated in the Angus Foundation golf tournament and in the NJAS Mentoring Program in 2004.

Quite the showman, Ward took home first place in showmanship six times in his career. He was an Indiana Junior Angus Association reporter and an NJAS voting delegate.

Ward took home first place at the 2004 NJAS and grand champion at the 2003 Northern Indiana Preview.

Taylor Waugh

Taylor Waugh is pursuing a career that involves his two passions — cattle and crops. The North Dakota State University student is



Taylor Waugh

studying crop and weed science with minors in agriculture business and animal science. With plans to graduate in the spring of 2016, Waugh hopes to utilize his education as a forage specialist as a forage seed company.

The son of Bruce and LeeAnn Waugh of

Goodhue, Minn., served as the Minnesota Junior Angus Association president from 2013 through 2014. He was an NJAA voting delegate in 2012.

At the Goodhue County Fair, Waugh took grand champion in the B&O division. He participated in livestock judging and the quiz bowl contests at NJAS, placing second in the quiz bowl.

Being a member of NJAA, Waugh was able to obtain fulfillment from his junior career. He says, “Looking back at my tenure in the NJAA, I feel a sense of great satisfaction. I feel that I have been able to achieve so much. I have been able to participate in many different contests, showed cattle, attended LEAD conferences and so much more. The NJAS and the LEAD conferences have always been the highest points of my summer.”

Kayla Widerman

Kayla Widerman is dedicated. She is a longtime member of the NJAA and has been working with cattle since she was 4 years old. She has attended every NJAS since she was 9 and has participated in the Cook-Off and quiz bowl each 11 times. She has participated in photography and team fitting, as well. In 2013 she competed in the NJAS Showmanship Contest and finished in fourth place.



Kayla Widerman

She has represented Good Hope, Ill., as the Illinois Junior Angus Association princess in 2006 and queen in 2013, also serving as director, show secretary, treasurer and second vice president.

Widerman joined fellow NJAA members in attending Raising the Bar and LEAD conferences throughout her membership. She also participated in the NJAS Mentoring Program in 2003 and 2004.

The daughter of Jeff and Carrie Keeney and Bill Widerman said of her NJAA experience, “My time in the NJAA has been undeniably amazing. I would not trade the friends and memories I have made for anything in the world. The [American] Angus Association has played a huge role in my life, and it will forever hold a huge part in my heart.”

She currently attends Southern Illinois

University—Edwardsville in pursuit of a bachelor’s degree in psychology and criminal justice and plans to attend graduate school afterward.

Tylee Jo Williams

“Growing up as a member of the NJAA has taught me responsibility, hard work and leadership. The opportunities I have had to show my Angus cattle across the nation have brought me countless irreplaceable memories and friends. With



Tylee Jo Williams

the knowledge and experience I have gained through being involved in NJAA, I plan to continue raising Angus cattle and promoting agriculture to our youth through leadership roles,” says NJAB Director of Communications Tylee Williams.

Williams also served as president, vice president, second vice president, secretary, director and queen of her state association. She was a voting delegate and LEAD attendee, as well as an American Angus Auxiliary scholarship recipient.

At the 2013 NJAS, Williams participated in the Mentoring Program. In 2012 her team took first in team sales at NJAS.

Her parents, Ty and Nikolyn Williams of Rio Vista, Texas, watched their daughter earn reserve division champion at the 2011 NJAS. She also took home grand champion awards from the New Mexico State Fair, Tri-State Fair and San Angelo Stock Show — all with B&O cattle. Williams has three first-place showmanship awards to her name, as well.

Williams attends Texas Tech University and is pursuing a bachelor’s degree in agriculture communications. She plans to graduate in 2016.



Editor’s Note: The above bios were compiled with information provided on applications for the Gold Award. They do not include activities this summer. Please refer to coverage of junior activities, including the 2014 National Junior Angus Show, for details of additional accomplishments by these active juniors.