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Left: Dr. Bob VanStavern (center) linked cattle production to quality on the plate. He taught students and pros, mentored both and wrote instructional guides, always looking to make beef better for each link in the value chain.

marketplace,” Stika adds. “Because of his solid opinion and willingness to defend it, there’s an entire industry today that gets it.”

### Living legacy

John Grimes was one of the students and colleagues VanStavern touched. Starting in 1979, Grimes went on to work alongside his mentor in Ohio State Extension.

“Bobby was always a students’ professor, like a players’ coach,” Grimes says. “He really cared about his students, wanted you to learn, and was passionate about meat science and what he did for *Certified Angus Beef*.”

Grimes served as 2020 chairman of the brand’s board of directors (see page 164).

“The continued success of the *Certified Angus Beef* brand documents the need for farmers and ranchers to pay attention to carcass traits,” adds Grimes. “As demand grows, it’s our obligation to continue growing beef cattle to meet consumer needs.”

As for Clark, she and husband, Daniel, are meat scientists for the brand now, spending their days in the meat lab, on Zoom, researching and at seminars talking with partners, compounding a legacy of success.

“He set the foundation and pointed us in the best direction,” Clark says. “We have the best beef out there. We continue honoring him by challenging ourselves to always make it better.”

Stika’s advice for students: “Believe the data, be persistent, and then share your beliefs with conviction. Dr. Bob always did.”

Contributions to the mentor scholarship program are made available through AMSA. ■

Editor’s note: Crystal Meier is senior manager of corporate communications for CAB.

## VanStavern remembered with meat science mentorship.

by Crystal Meier, *Certified Angus Beef LLC*

It was an Elvis moment for Diana Clark: the chance to meet a legend in her field of meat science. The University of Illinois graduate shared an elevator ride and introductions with Bobby “Dr. Bob” VanStavern.

“He pushed for the focus on quality,” Clark says. Leaner beef was the 1970s trend, but “he knew what good quality beef was.”

The Ohio State University (OSU) Extension professor linked cattle production to quality on the plate. He taught students and pros, mentored both and wrote instructional guides, always looking to make beef better for each link in the value chain. Uniting all those needs raised challenges, but it would pay in time.

That road began when *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) brand co-founder Mick Colvin entered VanStavern’s office in August 1977, seeking science-based criteria to incentivize higher-quality beef for consumers. The details were already in a desk drawer, leading to

the brand’s retail launch the next year.

### Mentoring still

In meat science as in life, the OSU legend was a listener and champion of others. Last February, he passed away at 90.

To honor his leadership style, the brand helped launch an American Meat Science Association (AMSA) Development Council “mentorship” in 2020. Each year, one student who presents beef-quality research at the AMSA Reciprocal Meat Conference will receive a scholarship in his honor, funded by those VanStavern mentored. The first \$1,000 recipient will be chosen next year.

“I think it’s fitting to honor Dr.

Bob in this way,” says fellow meat scientist and CAB President John Stika. “Dr. Bob believed the data he collected and in the power of a better eating experience, and that’s why research is such a rock-solid part of our specifications still today. He helped so many people — students, colleagues and producers to consumers — be more successful.”

The OSU legend consulted for the first premium branded-beef program for 25 years, on the team with Colvin, meat packers, processors, distributors, retailers and chefs. He nurtured and encouraged. He visited their businesses and crafted “Science Behind the Sizzle” training much like Clark presents today.

More than 19,000 partners market the brand in 52 countries now, delivering 6.3 billion servings annually.

“Things Dr. Bob advocated for seem commonplace today, because 40 years later, other programs and breeds are touting quality in the