

MORE THAN A CROWN

The 2022-23 Miss American Angus wears her passion as proudly as she does the red coat.

by Megan Silveira, assistant editor

“It’s still hard to put into words.”

For Kelsey Theis, slipping on the red coat of Miss American Angus for the first time was just about indescribable. Words like “incredible” come to mind, but the 18-year-old knows they don’t fully capture the honor that comes with her new crown.

At the 2022 National Angus Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah, Nov. 5-7, the Leavenworth, Kan., native stood in front of beef industry powerhouses, friends and family as she was named the latest Angus royalty.

ANGUS THROUGH AND THROUGH

“I have three older siblings and some older cousins that were all actively involved in the junior association,” Theis explains. “It was kind of just second nature for me to attend all of the events and be involved.”

Family history stretches further than Theis’s generation, however. While her mom, Tonya, didn’t grow up in the show ring, a marriage to Jerry helped spark her love for the beef industry. It is her parents’ passion that brought Theis to the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) in Denver, Colo., for her first birthday.

The memories from that day

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

“I just want to do the best job I can representing the breed, and I want to make sure I have a positive influence on younger members, so they can have the same experience with me that I had with past Miss American Anguses. I hope they can just look up to me just how I was able to with others in the past.”

– KELSEY THEIS

aren’t vivid in her mind, but the influence of her parents still stands strong.

Tonya is active in the American Angus Auxiliary, elected to serve as treasurer for the organization the same week Theis earned her crown, and Jerry is currently serving on the American Angus Association Board of Directors.

Angus might have been a breed she was born into, but Theis has found her own footing in the industry.



Mentors like her mother; Anne Lampe; Lynne Hinrichsen; Eva Hinrichsen; and older sister, Megan; have served as her inspiration. At every Angus event she attended, the red coat of Miss American Angus stood out from the crowd like a beacon.

As a young lady learning to find her voice in a competitive industry, Kelsey looked up to other strong

women. She knew even as a child the importance of the role the red coat had.

“I just want to do the best job I can representing the breed, and I want to make sure I have a positive influence on younger members, so they can have the same experience with me that I had with past Miss American Anguses,” Theis says. “I hope they can just look up to me just how I was able to with others in the past.”

She has big plans of using her voice to empower females who have a passion for Angus cattle. Theis says she knows women have an important role to play in the industry — a role that isn’t defined by their gender or background.

“It’s just as much women who can do anything in this industry,” she explains. “I think that’s not as big of a problem today, but is still, depending on where you grow up, it might kind of seem that way. So, I want [young women] to see that you can always do anything you set your mind to.”

Theis is looking forward to representing the breed she calls home. Since the start of her junior career, she’s been eager to showcase the strength of *the Business Breed*. From the high-quality cattle to the devotion and determination of the producers, she sees how the American Angus Association is united by a common goal.

Continued on page 140

WINNING SPEECH: COURAGE VS. FEAR

It has been said that, “You gain courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You must do the thing you think you cannot do.”

In this life, fear is inevitable. We have all been afraid to try something new and get out of our comfort zone or to make a change in our lives.

Now I want you to visualize a few things with me.

It’s 2014 in Indianapolis, Ind., and a little blonde girl from Kansas is surrounded by her parents and siblings getting ready to walk into the NJAS show arena for the first time with encouragement from her entire family.

It’s game point — you are the only seventh grader on the middle school volleyball A team stepping to the line to serve in the league championship. To add a little more pressure, it’s your school’s biggest rival and some of your club volleyball teammates are across the net.

Now it’s August of 2018, and you are walking into the front doors of Pleasant Ridge High School for your first day as a freshman.

2022 and you’re four hours and a state away from home, and you are leaving your dorm room to go to your first day of biology class at Northern Oklahoma College (NOC).

You might be wondering what all of these have in common. The first thing is that it was me, Kelsey Theis, from Leavenworth, Kan. And the second thing is, I was nervous and scared.

The good news though — I survived it all. I was third in class with my bred-and-owned heifer AVF Sara 9374. I served nine straight points to win game three against our rival. I made it through four exciting years of high school even during a global pandemic; and I got an A on my first biology test at NOC.

It was those moments of persevering and allowing courage to conquer my fears that made me stronger and got me to where I am today. This concept can also ring true for the development of the Angus breed in the United States. The American Angus Association would not have gotten to where it is today without the courage of a particular person in 1873, when George Grant decided to bring four Angus bulls from Scotland to the plains of Victoria, Kan. Despite the benefits of the Angus breed, many were hesitant to implement the new polled, black-hided cattle into their own herd.

This shows that there are times in life when not everything will go perfect or exactly like you planned the first time, and it might feel like you have failed. One of my personal experiences with this was last fall when I decided to try out for the Kansas 4-H All-Star Team. When I didn’t make the team, I instantly felt discouraged. Then I found a quote by Mary Pickford that states, “Failure is not the falling down, but the staying down.” After reading this, my mindset changed. I decided I would spend the next year working on getting better, and set the goal of making the team. I judged more classes and spent time practicing reasons. Walking into the tryout this September, I was more confident in my abilities; but of course I was still nervous. Even though I was fearful, I had to put faith in the

work I had done and stick to what I knew I could do. When I decided to have the courage to keep going, I was able to experience a more successful outcome.

Similarly, it would have been easy for George Grant to get discouraged. It certainly was not an easy feat to leave his home, cross an ocean and settle into new ground. But it wasn’t until he got here that the difficult journey of creating *The Business Breed* would truly begin. Initial skeptics of the strange-looking cattle made expansion of the breed difficult. Despite the adversity, he continued on with his vision and crossed the bulls with native Texas longhorns and produced polled black calves that were able to survive well in the winter. When the calves weighed more the next spring, it demonstrated the value of the new breed. Eventually ten years later in 1883, the American Aberdeen-Angus Breeders’ Association was formed with just 60 members. Today it has grown to be serving nearly 25,000 members and is the largest beef-breed registry in the world. This goes to show that being confident and having the courage to go after your goals can result in an outcome even bigger than what you could have imagined.

Courage within the Angus breed did not end with George Grant. The formation of the new association allowed room for tremendous growth and more specialized entities, allowing for further development. In 1952 the American Angus Auxiliary was chartered by a group of courageous women with the mission of giving women Angus breeders and wives of Angus breeders a chance to get better acquainted and to aid in promoting the breed. Again in 1978 courage was shown by the founders of CAB (Certified Angus Beef) while developing their groundbreaking idea. Even though there were skeptics, they continued with their goal of creating a high-quality, specification-based brand. Their confidence in the values of their specifications and the potential of the *Certified Angus Beef*® brand helped them face the challenges along the way.

Now let’s imagine if fears always won in life. Would we have the privilege of being a part of the Angus family that we all know today if George Grant did not have the courage to import the first Angus bulls to America? Would Certified Angus Beef be able to sell 1.2 billion pounds in 2022 if the American Angus Association board was not confident enough to take such a remarkable chance? If it wasn’t for the courage of founding members of the American Angus Auxiliary that took a chance to benefit countless members of the NJAA, would I be standing here today?

The next time you find yourself facing a situation that scares you, just remember courage is not the absence of fear, but the judgment that something else is more important than the fear.

It’s not always easy to face your fears, but without the courage to do so, there is no room for progress to be made. Everything you could ever dream of is simply just waiting for you on the other side of your fears.

Though some fill the role of competitor, she says her Angus peers are the best friends she's ever had, and they never waver in their support of her. That camaraderie and encouragement has only grown since Theis left home for college.

She's attending Northern Oklahoma College and pursuing a degree in animal science. Her classes are balanced with time as a member of the livestock judging team.

Vet school is a future option, but Theis says accounting classes are also laid out for her future. No matter where her college career will take her, Theis says she will wear the red coat with pride in this upcoming year.

"It's an incredible opportunity. I'm very excited," she says. "It's very surreal just watching other girls that have gotten this opportunity.



2022-2023 MISS AMERICAN ANGUS CANDIDATES

On stage at the National Angus Convention are the five candidates. Pictured (from left) are Allison Davis, Shelbyville, Tenn.; Hailey Jentz, Belmont, Wis.; Alexis Koelling, Bowling Green, Mo.; Lizzie Schafer, Owaneco, Ill.; and Kelsey Theis, Leavenworth, Kan.

Some of them have been my biggest mentors or role models, and it's crazy to consider myself on the same level

as them in that position; but I'm just very excited and honored." **AJ**

SPONSORS

American Angus Association

Certified Angus Beef

All-American Angus Breeders' Futurity Committee

American Angus Hall of Fame

The Atlantic National Angus Show

212 Livestock Products; Chris Wilson

Rocking W Angus; Brad and Cindy Worthington

Details by Design

Diane Johnson

Becky Tiedeman

Turner Meadow Ranch

Mark and Cindy Ahearn

Sunrise Sunset Farm

Tyler, Courtney and Piper Cates

Robert Hill and Marlene Dukehart

Futura Farms

The Steve Trosper family

Brock Farms Angus Cattle

Olson Land and Cattle

Harward sisters

David and Carolyn Gazda

Charlie and Paula Boyd

Nigro's Western Store

David Nigro Jr.

Mark and Gerry McCully

Amy Lyons Langvardt

Hinrichsen Ranch

Ron, Lynne, Cale and Eva Hinrichsen

Seldom Rest Farms; The Lois Foster family

Yon Family Farms

Wallace Cattle Co.

Ernie and Tammy Wallace family

Jill (Sommers) Harker, Janelle (Sommers)

Deatsman and Sharon Sommers

Harry H. Bachman, auctioneer

Connealy Angus

Eberlee Farms

Bill and Jane Ebert

McCabe Genetics

Randel and Varee McCabe

Clearwater, Jim and Joann Pipkin

Kallie Anne Knott

Weaver Show Cattle

Shally Rogen Family

Gordon and Anne Patton Schubert