



# The Front Gate

by **ALLEN MOCZYGEMBA**, CEO, American Angus Association

## Leadership

The long and colorful history of our Association is marked by visionary leadership — leadership that had the vision to make decisions that moved the Association forward by growing the popularity of the breed while increasing the relevance of the Association.

### Creating a legacy

While most of those decisions were obvious in hindsight, at the time they were implemented, they weren't always that clear, or for that matter, popular.

But strong leaders have vision, and passion in whatever that vision may be. Even when that means a break with tradition and possibly upsetting the status quo.

When Professor W.H. Tom have led the effort to create the Angus Bull Show at the National Western Stock Show in the 1940s to help grow the Angus breed's presence in the West, there were concerns about whether the investment required justified the return. Likewise, when C.K. Allen's edgy leadership

style led to the launch of the *Certified Angus Beef*® brand and the purchase of the *Angus Journal* in 1978, there were naysayers. Yet the decisions made during the time of both men grew the popularity of the breed and ultimately increased the relevance and value of the Association.

Similarly, Eric Grant, president of Angus Productions Inc. (API), has led the Association's media properties with both boldness and vision. While his tenure with the Association will officially end March 1, it's important to recognize how his vision has advanced the Angus breed on several fronts.

In 2009, he was the first public relations director to bring all functions of the Association's national advertising campaign in-house, a role that had traditionally been handled by an outside advertising agency. In 2010, he and his team launched Angus TV with *I Am Angus* and *The Angus Report*. To date, the Angus YouTube channel has reached more than 4 million viewers

and continues to grow in popularity. He also transformed our sale book business by increasing distribution to include online access, which now translates to the equivalent of almost 30 million print-comparable page views annually.

In 2014, he oversaw the unification of the public relations department and API to form Angus Media. Finally, he and his team have also helped build the National Angus Convention into one of agriculture's premier events. Just this past January, he led the Association's efforts in relaunching the National Western Angus Bull Sale into the most talked-about event in Denver.

While Eric's leadership has been impactful in innumerable ways, his legacy will not be the work he produced. His legacy will be his development of a talented and dedicated communications team. That's what great leaders do — they inspire others to carry on their vision.



Eric Grant and his wife, Patti, and their now 12-year-old son, Johnny.

PHOTO BY CARRIE HEITMAN

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