

Championing the Breed

Live Oak Legend Award recipient continues his journey supporting breeders and promoting Beefmaster.

by Chel Terrell

That distinctive holler coming from outside the sale ring signals to the auctioneer another bid from an enthusiastic buyer, followed shortly by the pound of the gavel and "Sold!" It's a reassuring sound from a longtime supporter and familiar face to Beefmaster breeders.

As a passionate advocate of the breed, E.C. Larkin Jr. has devoted countless hours over the last 40-plus years promoting Beefmaster cattle and working ringside at sales across the country. He's that familiar face buyers and sellers look forward to seeing, confident in his professionalism and enjoying his warm, easy manner.

"As an auctioneer, when E.C.'s a ring man I'm comfortable and very confident in him. He knows what he's doing, and the people in the crowd are comfortable and confident in him as well. He just does a good job," said Anthony Mihalski, close friend and auctioneer. "People enjoy him and have a lot of fun with him, but at the same time he does a professional job with ease."

In recognition of his continued support for the Beefmaster breed, the Live Oak Beefmaster Breeders Association (LOBBA) will honor

10 *The Beefmaster Couman* / January 2018

Larkin with their Legend Award during this month's bull sale in Three Rivers.

"We consider E.C. part of the Beefmaster family," said LOBBA President Melvin Scherer Jr. "I cannot remember a time that his name hasn't been mentioned during Live Oak meetings or during our sales. He's been part of the establishment around here."

Larkin began working Beefmaster sales in the Live Oak County area in the early 1970s while on staff at *Western Livestock Journal* and after he took ownership of the *Gulf Coast Cattleman* magazine. In 1977, he married wife Margie and they moved their office from Beaumont to San Antonio. Roughly a year later, Larkin was approached by Beefmaster Breeders United (BBU) leadership about starting an official publication for BBU.

"I was a little hesitant, but Margie said let's go for it, so we did," Larkin said.

They began publishing *The Beefmaster Couman* in 1979, further connecting his passion for the breed to the people he

sought to help market and advertise their breeding programs. January 2018 marks the start of the 40th year publishing *The Beefmaster Couman*.

Larkin's been a mainstay in the advertisement business in the Live Oak area since the '70s, Scherer said. "I've been in this thing a long time and cannot remember a time when I didn't see E.C. or somebody from *The Couman* or *Gulf Coast Cattleman* always participating and helping



Working the ring.

with Live Oak events. He's always supported us when we need it – not just Live Oak, but any Beefmaster function in the South Texas area. He's always been very helpful."

Larkin has worked almost all Live Oak sales over the years, particularly the prestigious bull sale. "The Live Oak bull sale is kind of the kickoff for the year, and it always sets a good bar for the rest of the year. It's a good measuring stick," he said. "The sale attracts both purebred and commercial buyers from the U.S. and Mexico looking for good quality Beefmaster bulls in volume from breeders across the country, and the bidding gets really competitive. Having 10 to 12 judges made up mostly of commercial cowmen grade the bulls is one of the best things they do. It's very prestigious to receive the high grading bull honor."

Larkin recalls many trips to Live Oak County for Beefmaster activities in his early publication days. "Live Oak is one of the oldest satellites and it's always been a 'hub' for Beefmaster. Before I even started *The Couman*, it seems like we were down in Three Rivers several times a month at the Live Oak sale barn or at a ranch in the county. There were so many breeders down there and they had a lot of sales and other events."

Many of those breeders were Live Oak Legends themselves in the breed, including Walker White, Joe Hendricks, Humberto Garza, Don Moore, Pat Shannon, Melvin Scherer, Bill Carr, Don Kasper, Hans Wittenburg ... the list goes on, Larkin noted. "There were a lot of big names involved with Live Oak," he said. "A lot of the early movers and shakers of the breed seemed to come from that area."

Larkin, with his easy-going personality and good 'ol boy approach to life, was warmly welcomed into the Live Oak Beefmaster family by these legends and other breeders, which has continued to today. Mihalski, who first met Larkin in the early '70s while getting his own start in the auctioneering and marketing side of the business, attests to that.

"He's always had that personality that everybody enjoys being around and he fit in anywhere he went. Some of the old timers have got 'ways of doing things' and their personalities and characters have always fit. They've always looked at E.C. as one of them, and I think he looks at them as the kind of person he wants to be. And he is," Mihalski said. "He's one of those guys, like Hoss Shaw, that is a true personality."

"With E.C.'s personality, he makes friends easily and everybody really likes him and feels very comfortable around him. I don't remember the first

time I met him, but I know that I liked him right off the get go," said another legend, Nolan Ryan.

"I think that's the way most people's impression is when they meet him. His name is very fitting for him when everyone calls him 'Easy' because he's easy to get to know, easy to like and he has an easy approach to life," Ryan said.

In the publication field, Larkin is as well-known and as big a personality as anybody you come across, Mihalski said.

"He has always been such a supporter of agriculture and a big part of the marketing end of the cattle business," he said. "From my perspective, he is so well liked and part of the business that it didn't matter if he worked for or owned the publication, people wanted to advertise in his publication for the advertising value and the fact they hoped to have him represented at their sale."

"He's solid and such a supporter of the Beefmaster breed. But I do think people often overlook or neglect to consider how often they've asked E.C. to publish news about an event or write a special article to get the word out about something. However, he has always been willing to help."

Mihalski quickly points to Larkin's annual donation of *The Couman* cover to benefit Beefmaster

Live Oak Legend Award Recipients

1992 – Walker White	2005 – Anthony Mihalski
1993 – J.B. Kolb	2006 – Seymour Wormser
1994 – Jim Ed Rhodes	2007 – Eddie Wicker
1995 – Enrique G. Garcia	2008 – Melvin Scherer Jr.
1996 – Joe Yarbro	2009 – John Newburn
1997 – Leo Joeris	2010 – Bill Carr
1998 – Joe Hendricks	2011 – Hans Wittenburg
1999 – Ascencion "Chon" Martinez	2012 – Joe Martinez
2000 – Jack Dunn	2013 – Billy Weikener
2001 – Humberto Garza	2014 – Ray Walker
2002 – Pat Shannon	2015 – Fred & Judy Long
2003 – Don Moore	2016 – Rocky Carrillo
2004 – Don Kasper	2017 – Tim Chapman
	2018 – E.C. Larkin Jr.

Breeders Cattlewomen, the Junior Beefmaster Breeders Association and more recently the Beefmaster Educational Endowment Foundation (B.E.E.F.).

"It was probably 10 or more years ago that I sat down and tried to go back through and total how many dollars that meant. At that time, the dollars that he raised every year in the sale of the cover was in excess of \$50,000 to \$60,000. And that was over a decade ago," he said.

"It's out of E.C.'s generosity that he does it, and that's true in so many things that he does, whether it's a small fundraiser that he'll participate in or an annual or regular fundraiser throughout the industry. He's always been there for the breed and the people that he works with."

continued on page 14



With Nolan and Ruth Ryan at a Beefmaster sale in the late '70s.

January 2018 / *The Beefmaster Couman* 11

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



Happy New Year to Our Beefmaster Family!

by Steve Carpenter, BBU President, Tecumseh, Okla.

I wish a healthy, happy and prosperous new year to all of our Beefmaster family. Over the past year we have had tremendous growth in the interest of the cattle industry concerning our Beefmasters. I expect the 2018 year to be even better!

We are thankful for the many blessings that have come our way during 2017. Bill Pendergrass survived a stroke and continues to improve as he works his way through the rehabilitation process. The studies concerning feed efficiency from the USDA Meat Animal Research Center showed Beefmasters to be the top breed over 17 other breeds. That study has opened the doors for Beefmasters to be in the discussion by many in the commercial cattle industry. Also, the recognition that our cattle can provide the most maternal heterosis has put our cattle in high demand.

Our sales continue to soar as the demand for our cattle increases. The bull sales steadily set new record average prices for quality herd sires and commercial bulls. An increase in new buyers and commercial cattlemen can be seen at every sale. One bull sale this fall averaged nearly \$9,300 on

over 100 bulls! Wow!

As of this writing, the Noble Integrity Beef Alliance board of directors has not met, so we do not know what their decision will be on including Beefmasters in their program. I am very hopeful and optimistic that we will be included. If this opportunity comes our way, we should see an ever-increasing demand for quality commercial bulls and replacement females.

Some really great cattle will be offered at sales during the first few months of 2018. Start planning now to attend one of these Beefmaster family reunions! As breeders, we should all be looking for or striving to produce those animals that have what I call "the whole ball of wax." The Six Essentials should be your guide. Not one or two, but all six!

Happy New Year to all! *



CHAMPIONING THE BREED

continued from page 11

The only thing Mihalski has seen Larkin "struggle" with in life is the article he writes every month in *The Couman*. "I've always said that it's obvious he doesn't have much time to spend writing!" Mihalski jokes. "In all seriousness though, for me E.C. is one of the hardest guys to talk about. I don't know how you can properly describe him other than he's never met a person that didn't like him or appreciate him for being a good guy and a professional. He's just a special person and very deserving of this award."

Larkin is incredibly humbled by the honor. "It's an honor to be put in with the names that have received this award in the past, but I sure don't feel like I should be in with that kind of group," he said. "Just doing the magazine is nothing like these guys that are having to invest in their cattle and breeding programs and have their money tied up in it and the work they've done to build that, where all I've done is sit back and ride along with the breed."

"It's very humbling to get this award and it makes you really feel good that people would think of you that way."

"E.C. is very loyal to the Beefmaster association and Beefmaster cattle. I think that's something that everybody really appreciates," Ryan said. "I don't know anybody more appropriate to receive the Live Oak Legend Award than him for what he has meant to the association and to the breed for all these years. I think it's only appropriate that he be the recipient of that award." *



SUBASTA BOUND!

L² 23/17 by Prodigy and our donor "Sugar Peggy Sue" will be 16 months of age by sale date. She has an abundance of genetic qualities. All of our Prodigy calves are showing a similar cut.
L² 32/17 by Max and our donor "Forever Sugar" will also be 16 months of age. This straight topped female displays a good carcass. IMF 3.62. These two open heifers will highlight our offering of 3 Heifers and 2 Herd Sire Prospects at the San Antonio Subasta on February 10, 2018.

TOTAL BALANCED PERFORMANCE BREEDING



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Message Regarding Scan Data

Please take note that all certified CUP labs will require a certificate "C" number or performance "P" number on each Beefmaster animal, when submitting scan data to the lab via your ultrasound technician. If scan data is submitted without a "C" or "P" number, the animal's scan data will be entered as a commercial animal and the breeder will not receive scan data results.

Take home message – make sure to register your animals as certified or performance prior to ultrasound scanning. *