

They Keep Giving. . . Giving. . . Giving. . .

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LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.)

— "It's the way George would have wanted it," his widow Dorothy said of the memorial fund that has garnered more than \$2,500 in George Metzler's name.

"George always loved cattle as a youngster. He grew up in 4-H and always supported the judging teams," Dorothy said of her reason for requesting that donations be sent to the Lancaster County Livestock Judging Team in lieu of flowers.

George, who died unexpectedly on Sept. 17, was known nationally as vice president and director of the Pennsylvania Polled Hereford Association and as a Polled Hereford breeder.

The Metzlers showed the 1997 Show Bull and were named Premier Exhibitor at the American Hereford Association at Kansas City—in addition to many other awards during his life-time.

It's expensive for livestock judging teams to compete on a national level. It requires thousands of dollars for the team to travel to regional and eventually national competition if they excel.

Through the generosity of acts such as the Metzlers and other interested individuals, the team, composed of teen-age students, are able to participate.

Few people are aware of the behind-the-scenes details required of the livestock judging teams. It's not only the commitment of the members, but of leaders, coaches, and benefactors.

While several colleges and livestock associations donate money to these teams, individuals consistently donate funds. According to Chet Hughes, Lancaster County livestock agent and coach for the Lancaster team, the vast majority of benefactors are individuals who at one time participated in the team.

One of these individuals is Dr. Donald M. Herr, a veterinarian at the Manheim Pike Veterinary Hospital. "Every year, he is the first person to send money and he always sends a little note telling how much he enjoyed being a member of the team years ago," Hughes said.

Herr was a member of the 1957 team. "It was a wonderful, positive experience to represent the state," Herr said. "It taught me to be observant, to talk on my feet."

At that time, the national competition was held in Chicago. "Blocky-appearing animals were in demand then. They were heavy,

obese things," Herr said recently as he flipped through news clippings of animals the team judged.

While industry standards have changed judging criteria, the benefits of participating on a state team have not.

"It's good training that took us all over the country," Herr said.

The Chester County Livestock Judging Team recently swept county, regional, and state titles to advance to national competition where they placed nineteenth in the nation this past November. Cheryl Fairbairn, livestock extension agent and coach for the team, estimates costs were about \$6,000. For high school students this is a formidable amount. Without the help of donors, the teams could not afford to travel to out-of-state competitions.

Fairbairn was a former judging team member. So she has sat on both sides of the spectrum. Because she considers judging team participation to be her best college experience, Fairbairn is an enthusiastic coach.

"If you can get up and give reasons before a group, than you can do anything," she said.

This year's Chester County team practiced often, many times leaving at 6 a.m. to visit various farms, observing livestock and methods of management, and returning at 6 p.m. "It is my philosophy that we should not spend the time or money if we are not going to put 150 percent effort into this endeavor," Fairbairn said.

The Chester County team included brothers Nathan and Jon Howe, Conrad Smoker, and Derrick Frank.

Team member Derrick Frank said that it takes lots of sacrifice of time and money when participating on a team. Because his team competed nationally, team members were practicing from May through November. Derrick, 18, a senior at Conestoga Christian Day School, works on his Uncle Nelson Beam's farm.

"My uncle was a former judging team member, so he knows what's required. He thinks the sacrifice is really worth it, so he was really good about giving me time off," Derrick said of the time needed to travel to Eastern States competition held in Massachusetts; Eastern National competition held in Timonium, Md.; Keystone International Livestock Exposition held in Harrisburg; The Main Event Livestock Judging Contest held in Columbus, Ohio; and the ultimate national competition held in Louisville, Ky.



The Chester County Livestock Judging Team swept state and regional competitions to advance to national, where they placed 19th in the nation. From left are Cheryl Fairbairn, coach; Jonathan Howe, Downingtown; Derrick Frank, Elverson; Conrad Smoker, Honey Brook; and Nathan Howe, Downingtown. Jonathan was also selected for the first-time ever National Champion Quiz Bowl Team in which four members from the East competed against four members from the West.



After her husband's death, Dorothy Metzler continues raising Polled Herefords at Salunga Acres with the help of her family and a herdsman. A memorial fund in her husband's name garnered more than \$2,500 for the Lancaster County livestock judging team. Her children and grandchildren continue the family's involvement in 4-H. "It's the best education a child can have," Metzler said.

This was the second year of competition for Derrick, who is enthusiastic in his praise of the program.

"It taught me public speaking, to speak confidently, and to prepare quickly," Derrick said. "It definitely is learning experience that expanded my horizons and gave me a broader view of ag."

Derrick was thrilled with the trip to Louisville, where they saw "beautiful animals and big farms."

This broader view of agriculture often inspires ag-related career choices. But not always. The experience has steered Derrick in the direction of being a minister and evangelist.

"Before participating, I wasn't good at public speaking. My grandfather was a preacher and farmer. I wanted to continue the family tradition, but I was too scared to speak up. God used this experience to help me become bolder and not back down," Derrick said.

After graduation from Conestoga Christian School, Derrick plans

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At the urging of her mother Laurie Schmidt, Jessica joined the meats judging team and continued on to national competition.

HOMESTEAD NOTES



Former judging team member Dr. Donald M. Herr said, "If I wouldn't have gotten into vet school, I would have wanted to be a county agent because of Max." Max Smith was Herr's coach during his years on the livestock judging team.