

Kick Your Feet Up

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

By Libby Williams



Henry Holloway

HOMETOWN: Darlington, Md.

EDUCATION: B.S. in animal science, Virginia Tech University

POSITION WITH NSR: Hampshire Swine Registry fieldman from 1981-1983

CAREER TODAY: Owner and operator of "The Mill," a modern mercantile based out of Bel Air, Md.

GREATEST THING NSR BRINGS TO THE INDUSTRY: The strength of the junior program and the ability and potential to advance genetic improvement in the four major breeds.

This is part of a series featuring past employees of the breed associations that now comprise the NSR. Email comments to seedstockedge@nationalswine.com.

Henry Holloway liked looking at high-quality livestock. He liked studying phenotype, and he liked analyzing pedigrees. But those weren't the things he loved about his job as a fieldman for the Hampshire Swine Registry (HSR). He loved the people – the relationships he built with breeders and their families, the friendships he made with coworkers and the skills he learned from the contacts he made.

"What I enjoyed the most were the people, and I learned a lot about marketing (from them)," Holloway says. "We had some seedstock producers at that time that were some of the greatest marketers in the world."

Although he only served three years with the HSR, the marketing skills Holloway learned from the brilliant minds in the swine industry have helped him through his 25-year journey of owning and operating his own business.

That journey began as a child, growing up on the family farm. Naturally, Holloway fell into 4-H, showing pigs and cattle and competing on livestock judging teams. As college approached, Virginia Tech University (VT) attracted Holloway with its livestock judging program.

Holloway began his travels across the country first as a judging team member for VT, then as an assistant coach, and after graduation as a Hampshire fieldman. While assisting VT's livestock

judging team, Holloway met Warren Beeler, then HSR Southeast field representative, who suggested he pursue a job in the purebred swine industry.

"He encouraged me to apply at the Hampshire Swine Registry as a fieldman," Holloway says. "So I did, and they offered me the job."

Holloway started with the HSR after finishing college a quarter early. After two days of training, he was handed keys to a new Delta 88 diesel Oldsmobile and sent out on his own. On the road was where Holloway met those skilled marketers.

"People like Jack Rodibaugh – that guy was brilliant and still is. Bill Funderburg was phenomenal. Ruben Edwards, what a brilliant marketer. Stanley Martins ...," Holloway says. "Those guys really knew how to sell animals ... they could've sold anything."

And there were more than just four people. Many Hampshire breeders in that era were truly business leaders, and many left a lasting impression on Holloway. He'd need those skills sooner than he anticipated.

After three years with the HSR, Holloway's grandfather approached him with the prospect of purchasing the family business, a feed mill called Bel Air Farm Supply. Holloway was the only grandchild involved in agriculture, which made him a prime candidate to carry on the family

company. After working at the mill for two years, Holloway bought the business.

Twenty-five years later, Holloway still owns the business, now called The Mill, and has expanded it from a single mill to six different locations. To this day, the things he learned from breeders and their families have stuck with him.

"Whenever you get down and you think, 'Gosh, things aren't going right,' I think back to some of those guys and the things they did and the off-the-wall ideas they had," Holloway says. "They just reinvented themselves."

Holloway's wife, Brenda, helps him run The Mill. Their oldest daughter, Cassie, 20, a junior at Texas A&M University, has shown interest in the industry Holloway started in, serving as the NSR's National Junior Swine Association intern this past summer. Their son, Mark, 18, is a freshman at Iowa State University and they also have two younger children, Nathan, 15, and Maggie, 13.

Today, Holloway focuses on running his business with his wife and family, but he won't forget the people who taught him those valuable lessons.

"The people are by far and away the greatest thing," Holloway says. "You learn so much from watching the example they set, and just the way they live their lives."