

George and Shirley Barlass

George and Shirley Barlass, of Janesville, Wis., are the 65th recipients of the Distinguished Service Award of the American Jersey Cattle Association (AJCA).

The Distinguished Service Award is presented by the Board of Directors to as many living AJCA members and/or members' families, who, in the opinion of the Board of Directors, have rendered outstanding and unselfish service for many years and thereby made a notable contribution to the advancement of the Jersey breed in the United States.

George and Shirley Barlass found their lifetime passions for service within the dairy industry. From their early leadership roles in the Wisconsin Jersey Breeders Association (WJBA), American Jersey Cattle Association, National Dairy Shrine and 4-H activities, their efforts have evolved over time. In all they do, George and Shirley provide a positive presence for the Jersey breed as they unselfishly give their time and energy to build a stronger dairy industry. In fact, they have always sold cattle to youth to foster their interest in the Jersey breed.

In 1927, George's father and uncle began farming Gil-Bar Jerseys with registered animals. After George and Shirley married in 1954, they decided to join the dairy farm with a goal to promote their herd of Jerseys as well as the breed. Today the dairy is owned by their son, Gordon, and his wife, Michelle.

"From managing the farm, to cattle judging throughout the country, 4-H, and numerous boards at the county, state, and national levels, they have been greatly involved with the Jersey cow and the future leaders of the dairy industry," says past WJBA president, Donna Phillips, Newton, Wis.

George Barlass has served in a variety of leadership positions throughout the years including being involved with the launching of what we now know as the World Dairy Expo. Through George's service and dedication to the dairy business he was able to bring this event into existence. Since then George continually serves as a volunteer ringman during the shows. Also, each year during World Dairy



Expo George and Shirley enjoy welcoming fellow Jersey breeders and other breed enthusiasts to the National Dairy Shrine banquet during World Dairy Expo.

Shirley was a dedicated 4-H volunteer leader. During her time she edited two cookbooks that not only emphasized dairy in their recipes but also raised funds for Jersey's national meetings held in Wisconsin. She also served as a committee member of the National Jersey Jug Futurity during the 1989 version "The Greatest Jersey Show on Earth." Shirley was also named the Wisconsin Jersey wife of the year and as a couple they received the Wisconsin Jersey Distinguished Service award from the WJBA.

George was also involved with the AJCA where he served as director. He also served in the WJBA as a director and officer. As president of the WJBA he was instrumental in establishing production and type awards in the state. This helped encourage unregistered herds to begin registering their Jerseys and now Wisconsin still remains a top state for registration and transfers. As members of the WJBA they have received numerous awards including the Leading Living Lifetime production award along with other production and many type accomplishments.

Furthermore they are both lifetime members of the World Jersey Cattle Bureau which promotes U.S. Jerseys around the world. George and Shirley's passion for the Jersey cow radiates far beyond Jersey associations and into different facets of the industry including the Wisconsin Farm Short Course Board, the State Advisory Committee for the Young and the Adult Farmers program.

Together the couple has exhibited 19 All Americans and 29 Reserve All Americans through the years. They have also exhibited the Reserve National Grand Champion, National Junior Champion heifer, and National Jersey Jug Futurity winners at the All American. Their cow, Gil-Bar Gem Dreamy, holds the distinction of being the only Jersey to be named Grand Champion four years in a row at World Dairy Expo. As well, they have bred the Supreme Champion of the show and been named Premier Exhibitor and Breeder in Madison.

Furthermore they have sold the top selling animal at the following sales: National Heifer Sale, Folck Classic, Mid-States Fashion Revue Sale, Wisconsin State Sale, and the Badger Treasure Sale to name a few.

Other accomplishments include breeding Gil-Bar Unique Sparkler, JPI -221, who is the sire of the 2009 Grand Champion of the World Dairy Expo Jersey show and Stephan Sparkler Vera was the dam of the 2014 National Grand Champion and also Supreme Champion of the 2014 World Dairy Expo, TJ Classic Minister Venus.

Although they are retired they still remain involved with the beloved Jersey cow. Their days are spent sharing their passion and love for Jersey's with people in Wisconsin and around the world. They have passed their passion on to others because to them everyone is a member of their extended family and all are welcome.

Distinguished Service Awards

- 1954 W. W. Trout, Springfield, Ohio*
- 1955 Harold J. Turner, Bethel, Vt.*
- 1956 Judge Peter J. Shields, Sacramento, Calif.*
- 1957 R. C. Calloway, Baton Rouge, La.*
- 1958 Lynn Copeland, Nashville, Tenn.*
- 1959 Chester Folck, Springfield, Ohio*
- 1960 Ernest Greenough, Merced, Calif.*
- 1961 Paul Jackson, Wilmington, Ohio*

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- 1962 Harriet J. Groos, Vancouver, Wash.*
- 1963 R. K. Stout, Lansing, Mich.*
- 1964 Herbert G. Myers, Boise, Idaho*
- 1965 Charles S. Kelly, Hudson, Wis.*
- 1966 Joseph F. Sawyer, Galt, Calif.*
- 1967 Henry P. Knolle, Sandia, Texas*
- 1968 H. I. Sawyer, Hughson, Calif.*
- 1969 M. L. Baird, Springfield, Ohio*
- 1970 E. Lea Marsh, Jr., Old Lyme, Conn.*
- 1971 Stanley N. Chittenden, New Lebanon, N.Y.*
- 1972 Arthur Dieterich, Sherman, Texas*
- 1973 Amzi Rankin, Jr., Faunsdale, Ala.*
- 1974 Capt. T. J. and Elizabeth Bay, Lynden, Wash.*
- 1975 Mrs. Thomas H. Carruthers, III, Glendale, Ohio*
- 1975 Paul Sparrow, Athens, Tenn.*
- 1976 Wyatt A. Williams, Orange, Va.*
- 1977 Dr. J. H. Arnold, Newnan, Ga.*
- 1977 Reuben R. Cowles, Statesville, N.C.*
- 1978 Jean E. Lemmermen, Tiffin, Ohio*
- 1979 John Weir Jr., Geuda Springs, Kan.
- 1980 Clyde K. Chappell, Knoxville, Tenn.*
- 1980 Newell Mills, Fallon, Nev.*
- 1981 Harold Wright, White River Junction, Vt.
- 1982 C. L. Collins, Jr., Sylacauga, Ala.*
- 1983 Ray Chamberlain, Wyoming, N.Y.*
- 1984 Dr. C. A. Ernstrom, Logan, Utah*
- 1985 J. F. Cavanaugh, Columbus, Ohio*
- 1986 W. Charles McGinnis, Mountville, S.C.*
- 1987 G. Joe Lyon, Toledo, Iowa
- 1988 Dr. John Wilk, Raleigh, N.C.
- 1989 Robert Lord, Woodstock, Vt.*
- 1990 Dr. H. Duane Norman, Fulton, Md.
- 1991 Edwin L. Crotty, Trenton, N.J.
- 1992 Richard A. Riggs, Evansville, Ind.*
- 1993 Maurice E. Core, Columbus, Ohio
- 1994 John Giacomini, Eureka, Calif.*
- 1995 W. R. Lutz, Newton, N.C.*
- 1996 Max Gordon, Winchester, Ind.*
- 1997 Harold Owens, Frederic, Wis.*
- 1998 Richard Clauss, Hilmar, Calif.
- 1999 Elmer D. Larson, Burlington, Wash.*
- 2000 Dr. J. J. Malnati, Newberry, S.C.*
- 2001 Harold W. Roller, Weyers Cave, Va.
- 2002 Ray R. Schooley, Marshfield, Mo.
- 2003 D.L. Strandberg, D.V.M., Alma Center, Wis.
- 2004 Neal F. Schirm, Canal Winchester, Ohio*
- 2005 J. Lawrence Benson, New Lebanon, N.Y.
- 2006 Ted Luther, Mount Ulla, N.C.*
- 2007 Alvin Moss, Litchfield Park, Ariz.*
- 2008 David W. Spahr, Findlay, Ohio
- 2009 Dr. Robert C. and Helene C. Dreisbach, Mercer, Pa.
- 2010 Paul Chittenden, Schodack Landing, N.Y.
- 2011 Donald Sherman, Hilmar, Calif.*
- 2012 John Palmer, Cornish, Maine*
- 2013 James Ahlem, Hilmar, Calif.
- 2014 Glen and Marilyn Easter, Laurens, S.C.
- 2015 George and Shirley Barlass, Janesville, Wis.

* deceased