



He is Mr. Gracious

by Hoard's Dairyman staff

THROUGHOUT his career, Maurice Core has kept the organizations he has been involved with on the forefront through his leadership, management ability, vision, and character. Few people in our industry have been as widely respected and as deeply admired.

Through his early work in Iowa to his heading the American Jersey Cattle Association and, finally, to National Dairy Shrine, he has made every organization stronger. He has always done this with the best interests of the members of the organizations in mind and has been unwavering in his focus on conducting business in the right, fair, and progressive way.

Perhaps, as much as anything, Maurice Core, known to many as Maury, will be remembered as one of the most personable people in our industry. He has been a friend to everyone and always showed a genuine and keen interest in knowing well and caring about the people with whom he came in contact.

Hoard's Dairyman visited with Maury to reflect on his 60-year career in the dairy industry after his recent selection as World Dairy Expo's Industry Person of the Year.

You played a very instrumental role in transforming the Jerseys from a "hobby" breed to a "commercial" breed. It was quite a battle for the Jersey breed to make that transition. Go back to those battleground days . . . what issues were Jerseys having and what positive steps were taken to transform the breed?

I think much of the credit must go to my predecessor, Jim Cavanaugh, who just wouldn't back off. He was convinced that the new USDA sire program was viable and would get the job done. Up until that point, we'd been selecting top production bulls by naming them Senior Superior Sires. I remember Curtis Hobson, manager of Marlu Farms, Lincroft, N.J., saying, "Well, I could make an Angus bull a Senior Superior Sire." That statement was based on the testing procedures of the day. An owner of a Jersey bull could test one daughter of a bull or as many as he wanted or as few as he wanted and qualify for the top production level.

So, Jim Cavanaugh took the lead. It was in the early 1970s when we had some real battles at our annual meetings. There was a small organization that formed in Ohio to battle the established American Jersey Cattle Association. That group wanted to change the leadership and have

majority of the board. We were told one of their first priorities was to fire Cavanaugh and Core.

We won the battle in Reno, Nev. We thought the right people were elected to the board with the right new president and we chugged ahead. That was a turning point and the time when the breed really made a turn in the right direction.

This group that was battling the changes we needed to make consisted mainly of hobby farmers. They were more interested in type, the showing, and classification than they were production. They simply weren't worried about how much milk went in the tank. Jim Cavanaugh had done some calculations . . . in the previous 20 years which would have been 1950 to 1970, the Jersey breed increased production 2 percent. Jim Cavanaugh said that was due to alfalfa instead of timothy hay, not genetics.

You led the movement from traditional type classification to linear type appraisal, not only for the Jersey breed but all dairy breeds. Tell us more.

It was pretty simple. We just had to get a way from some short, compact, flat-rumped cows with nicely dished heads to Jerseys that were taller, longer, and more open-ribbed . . . cows that would make a good living for farmers. It was a must because over 90 percent of the dairymen in this country depend on the sale of milk for their income. Very little money is made in the show-ring, certainly from the premium standpoint. Now, some breeders have managed to sell some high-priced show cattle, but I think for a dairy breed to survive, the purpose of the dairy cow is to produce high-quality milk, and it needs to be in a volume, not in a tea cup.

When we got into linear scoring, we insisted that our appraisers be critical of the short, dumpy, sweet-looking kind and be kind to the tall, angular, open-ribbed, long-necked ones that looked like they produce milk and make a profit. It was a big swing in our breed, but it had to be done if we were going to, number one, survive and, number two, ever hope to expand the breed.

In one of your first roles with Jersey, you headed up the newly established Jersey Marketing Service (JMS). How has it impacted the breed?

Early on, and to this very day, JMS was tied to the increasing demand for Jersey milk and Jersey cows. At that time, the Southeast was a booming area for Jerseys. The Jersey Marketing Service tried to send down some of the best dairy cows from the Northeast because most of the folks in the South were milking cows of other breeds. If they were going to buy Jerseys, we knew those Jerseys were going to have to milk and be prof-

itable. So the Association established the Jersey Marketing Service because of a need . . . we had some cow jockeys who liked to send a semi-trailer load of Jerseys to a Southern herd in short order but they weren't very mindful of how much those cows needed to milk.

The growing demand for Jerseys made it a lot easier for Jersey Marketing Service to get off the ground. It was our job and responsibility to send the right kind and sell them at the right kind of a price. It was pretty easy for JMS to show growth because there was such a need for good cow people in the sales business.

During your tenure as executive secretary, the Jersey Research Foundation raised \$750,000. What impact has the Jersey Foundation had on the breed?

We all know that USDA can't do all the research in this country. Since 95 percent of the dairy cattle are Holsteins, over 90 percent of the research is going to be Holstein-oriented. We thought to get more Jersey research we needed to raise money. It's been a big asset to our breed to conduct \$20,000 to \$50,000 worth of research a year just on Jerseys. Of course, nearly all the land grant universities are looking for research and research dollars, and it's been a great working relationship to work with some of these schools and have ongoing research projects with them.

The All American Dairy Show has a great youth component thanks to your vision. What were you trying to achieve by making youth one of the main focuses of that event?

We felt from day one that our number one priority would be to work with the youth because you get them involved and then you get working with their parents. It's a family thing and it's worked out well for us.

We knew all along that the future leadership is going to come from the young people. If we could get juniors interested in the All American Junior Show, hopefully, Dad or Mom will get interested and buy a good one for their son or daughter. The youth program involves some 200 to 300 juniors going to that show. We also have sound scholarship achievement and production programs.

The American Jersey Cattle Association continues to focus on youth. A great thing they are working on right now is the Jersey Youth Academy. They had between 50 and 60 applicants for the first academy which was held last summer at Ohio State University. The program is for youth between 15 to 25 years old who would like some additional education on Jerseys.

What have been the keys to Jersey's growth?

If you look back, we had the genetics all along to get the job done. For years, we had too much



emphasis on type. When the USDA sire proving programs came along, fortunately, we had some breeders who were still working with the right kind of Jerseys so we could get production bulls for A.I. When you have a diverse group of well-balanced production sires, it's pretty easy to make progress.

And along with genetics, of course, is good management, and we've done everything I think humanly possible almost to encourage better management and better feeding.

You had a unique working relationship with retired executive secretary Jim Cavanaugh. Tell us more about it.

He's a great person. I remember when Scott Mayfield, American Jersey Cattle Club president from 1967 to 1969, told the board, "We've got a man in Jim Cavanaugh who could head up General Motors or any of the big corporations in this country, and we're just fortunate he's working for us." It was a really great experience for me to have the opportunity to work with him for 30-plus years.

Jim had a great ability to work with people and to sort out the good ones. I remember one time when I flew to the North Carolina annual meeting and interviewed Calvin Covington, and I came back and I told Jim, "I think he's a real find, we need to hire him." And Jim said, "Well, I interviewed one just as good on Saturday (Larry Kempton)."

Typical Cavanaugh, he didn't try to sort out who was better, he hired both of them. He had a real knack and ability to interview and sort out the good ones and get them hired.

Jim really looked out for his employees. I re-

member when our first child was born, and I was in Missouri making some farm visits. He called me in Hannibal, Mo., one morning and asked, "What are you doing down there?" I said, "Making some farm visits." He said, "Why don't you pack up and go home and get caught up on your correspondence and spend a week at home." Well, it's not every boss that will do that. He simply had a great way with people.

At a time when many people choose to retire, you took the helm at National Dairy Shrine. What led you to give more to the industry?

I simply wanted something to do. I told my wife, Carole, after I'd been retired for two weeks, I've had enough TV, it's time to go back to work.

Seriously, I've always been very fond of National Dairy Shrine and its purposes. After retirement, I went to visit Bernie Heisner, manager of COBA-Select Sires, to see if they might have any appraisal work or some other project. He said, "Why don't you take the job as secretary of National Dairy Shrine for a few years." I said, "Well, if you're serious, I could sure get serious. I could start Monday morning, you know."

It's a great organization, and I was just thrilled to have the opportunity to work with National Dairy Shrine. Bernie asked if I'd work five years, and I said no, I'll work one year then we'll take a look at it again. That was 11 years ago. I was fortunate enough to have good enough health to be able to work and I enjoy work. So, it was just a perfect fit for me.

What accomplishments during your tenure have set up NDS for long-term success?

My biggest concern when I went to work for Dairy Shrine was our museum. I was fearful of

the old projection equipment having a major breakdown during World Dairy Expo. So, I was thrilled when we got the building remodeled and the audio-video presentation updated and on computer equipment. Remodeling the lower level was a big project, as well. It was long overdue. Also, it's always gratifying to me when we can add on another scholarship or two which we've been able to do.

I think National Dairy Shrine is a sound workable organization. We've been blessed with great people who work on our board and serve as officers. I think the industry is just blessed with outstanding young leadership. My wife used to ask every year going home from Madison, Wis., "Where in the world do you keep finding those good young people to put on the board of directors?" My answer always was, "The dairy industry is full of those kind of people, and we just need to get some of them involved."

What do you think the future holds for NDS?

There are lots of businesses that support National Dairy Shrine and our scholarship programs. There's one organization right now, I'm told, that would like to underwrite every scholarship we have.

Our organization has some 18,000 to 19,000 members. They're not all active, of course, but I think if Joe Eves, Fred Idtse, Karl Musser, and some of the other original founders could come back and see our museum today and attend one of our awards banquets, they would be thrilled with our growth and progress. So, frankly, I think we just keep chugging along on the same route we're on.

You have always supported young people and have allowed NDS and AJCA to use your name to establish funds to support youth. Why?

I told both Jersey and Dairy Shrine I wasn't sure it would be helpful in raising funds to use my name. But I'm just thrilled to do it because they're going to start another scholarship fund. I think young people need all the encouragement we can give them. It's costly to go to college, but it always has been. Everything is relative to something.

We have a 22-year-old granddaughter who spent two years in college and then decided to take a job. Now, the company's been sold to a competitor and they downsized. She lost her job, and she said every place she goes for an interview they want to know if you've got a college education, so she's going back to college to complete her last two years.

We can never get overeducated. And anything that will help promote another scholarship fund, I'm all for it, whether it's got my name on it or not.

What is your favorite Jersey cow of all-time?

One of the cows I enjoyed showing and working with when I was at Curtiss Candy Farms was a cow named Imported Curtiss Candy Sultana that they brought over from the Isle of Jersey at quite a price. She was frequently champion at Midwest fairs, even when she was 10, 11, 12 years old. I enjoyed showing her, but you couldn't fool all the judges all the time.

I remember the show at Waterloo, Iowa, in 1952. Dale Dean from Meadowridge Farms in Michigan was judging the best udder class. He had me in about third place, and he came by and asked, "Are you getting any milk out of that udder or are you just playing?" I said, "Well, I've got some." He knew she wasn't a dairy cow. But we had a Scotsman who had milked more cows that made a thousand pounds fat than anybody in history, and he milked this cow 365 days 3x by hand, and she made a little over 10,000 M and over 500 F. That was her limit. But Dale Dean was smart. He said, "I'll tell you what you can do, Core. You can take this cow down to about 30th place or you can go back to the barn and we'll excuse her." That is what I did.

My all-time favorite was Generators Topsy. Everyone thought she was going to win the show

in 1972. She was in Columbus and looking great, and, of course, the cows never showed that year because of the fire. She was Grand Champion the next year in 1973. But she was a great cow. She was at Happy Valley Farms in Kentucky managed by Lew Porter. She was bred at Cedarcrest Farms in Alabama. They sold her in the Kentucky National as a 2-year-old for \$10,000. Briggs Cunningham bought her for Happy Valley Farm, and then she later went to Jim Chaney in Kentucky, and he flushed her a number of times. She was a tremendous cow in her own right. She would be my favorite today.

What was it like working for Curtiss Candy Farms?

I couldn't have asked for anything better getting right out of college. After graduation, I stopped there to see a friend, and Delbert Kingston took me on a tour of the farm. When I was ready to leave he asked, "What do you think?" I said, "Well, it's been a great weekend, and I'll remember it forever." He asked, "How would you like to be herdsman for the Jersey and Guernsey breeds here?" I said, "You're kidding." He said, "No. Come back and go to work for us."

It was a great eye opener for a green farm boy from Iowa. When I went there, Mr. Schnering had 13 farms in northern Illinois and 10,000 acres. There were 550 farm employees. We had three full-time veterinarians who worked at the main farm. They had all five dairy breeds, two beef, two sheep, and two swine. They sent 10,000 broilers to Chicago every week. They also had a mink farm, trout streams, and an A.I. stud. It was a big operation.

The main barn had about 180 box stalls where we milked 3x a day. They had a great farm office, a beautiful office for the veterinarians, and a room where we kept all the trophies and plaques. We had one guy who didn't do anything but walk the aisles of the barn and wipe the dust and fly specks off the top of the box stalls. Judging teams and type conferences for all breeds came there from all over the country. So it was a great experience for a 20-year-old farm kid.

When we went to the district Guernsey show, they hired Lee Yost from Pennsylvania. He came in and worked with me for a couple weeks, helping get the cattle ready. Dean Kildee was the judge of the two-day show of the Northern Illinois Guernsey Parish Show, and the champion cow was the champion cow at the National Show that fall and that was the kind of a show it was. It was some kind of an eye opener for this kid.

Unfortunately, Mr. Schnering passed away from a sudden heart attack about 18 months after I was there and then they began to sell out. His oldest son got us together and told us that the best year Mr. Schnering ever had in the farm business he lost over \$1 million.

It has been said by many people that you are fair, gracious, and have good business sense. How have you been able to lead business organizations in a fair and progressive manner while still being so personable?

I've done what I wanted to do in life and that was work in the dairy industry. As I said, I've been very fortunate to have had some good jobs including the first one when I worked for Mr. Schnering at Curtiss. I remember the first time we got together, the whole dairy crew, when Mr. Schnering told us, "I'm not smart enough to manage the largest candy company in the world, but I think I'm smart enough to hire the people who can." During his lifetime, he developed Curtiss into the largest candy company in the world, and I don't suppose there will ever be another farm like he had in Cary, Ill. I was pretty fortunate to get that kind of a job right out of the box.

From there, I went with Jersey and spent 37 years there working for Jim Cavanaugh and the Jersey Association. A lot of people would say and I would be the first one to vote this way . . . I feel like he was the most successful breed secretary

for any breed. And to spend a lifetime working with him and then to have an opportunity to work a decade with Dairy Shrine. I've just been plumb fortunate. If I've made any good decisions, it's because I've had as good a training as you can buy.

Right after I graduated from high school, I got a letter from a man named Dean H.H. Kildee at Iowa State . . . I'd never met him. But he said we need you to come to Iowa State. We have a pretty good dairy judging team that we would like you to try out for. About two weeks later, I get a letter from faculty member Art Porter. I suppose he put Kildee up to write the first letter. And Art wrote and said we need you at Ames to be on the judging team. Well, we won the national contest at Waterloo two years later.

I've been fortunate. I've been in the right place at the right time. I've had a good life, and I've done just what I wanted to do, just work in the dairy industry. If I've had the ability to work with people, it's because of great parents and training. I don't know how much of it I ever picked up or used, but I had every opportunity to succeed. 🐄

The Maurice Core Fund is being established by National Dairy Shrine to award scholarships to incoming college freshmen who are pursuing a career in the dairy industry. Last fall, National Dairy Shrine Board authorized the Maurice Core fund to be established with a fund-raising goal of \$50,000. National Dairy Shrine is pleased to announce that they have met 70 percent of the targeted goal but still need help from other dairy industry enthusiasts to reach the fund-raising goal.

Those interested in making a donation to the Maurice E. Core Scholarship Fund may send it to: National Dairy Shrine, Dr. David Selner, Executive Director, P.O. Box 1, Maribel, Wis. 54227 or call (920) 863-6333 or e-mail info@dairyshrine.org.