

LARRY MCGUIRE

Written by Gary Jennings

For one reason or another, we all meet people in our lives that we will never forget. For me, Larry McGuire was one of those individuals. As executive secretary of the American Southdown Breeders Association for 32 years, I so enjoyed getting to personally know the breeders through phone calls or in visiting their farms. Larry would always call at a specific time of day to visit about Southdowns, his past involvement with sheep, his youth, and even some politics.



Larry and his brothers grew up in Iowa. Like many farm boys, they raised sheep. He loved telling about the school bus they converted into their show rig. They traveled in that bus from show to show throughout the Midwest to exhibit their sheep. His love for showing sheep tied into his determination to raise good sheep and work with youth.

Larry and his brother Bruce always took a good consignment of Southdowns to the Midwest Stud Ram Sale. While visiting one year at the sale, I mentioned that one of the visions of the ASBA was to hold a stand-alone National Junior Southdown Show. The goal was to promote Southdowns, to organize an enjoyable youth show, and to provide fun-filled family activities. That led to a subsequent phone call from Larry in which he pledged financial support and volunteered to help see the vision through.

Thus, the first independent National Junior Southdown Show premiered the following year in Larry's home state of Minnesota. One of Larry's contributions included providing admission tickets and bus transportation to Minneapolis for a Minnesota Twins baseball game for all desiring to attend. Larry continued to financially support Southdown youth throughout the years.

One day, I received a phone call from Larry where he proposed the idea of donating a set of Southdown yearling ewes to junior members desiring to begin their own flocks. Again, Larry tied together his love for Southdowns and youth. From that began the Ewes for Youth program. For a number of years, Larry donated ewes at the Star of Louisville Sale to youth chosen from their submitted applications. Later, other breeders joined him in building these starter flocks. In knowing Larry, I can say he would be very pleased that the Ewes for You program is being taken to the next level by again encouraging youth to develop their own Southdown flocks.

Often, none of us know the effects or influences our actions have on the lives of youth until later in life. There are many wonderful people in the Southdown breed who are willing to offer their knowledge, skills, and successes to the next generation. Isn't that the reason this breed is so great?