

TEXAS CATTLEWOMEN LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT NOMINATION



JAN ELLIOTT – UVALDE, TEXAS

In her middle school yearbook, a young Jannifer McCaleb predicted she would grow up to marry a cowboy and have six children. She did exactly that. Today, Jan McCaleb Elliott resides in Uvalde, Texas and has been a member of Texas CattleWomen on and off for nearly fifty years. After graduating from Texas Tech University in 1967 she married rancher, Albert Sager “Tex” Elliott and became a partner in his Texas cattle operation, El Bigote and joined South Texas CattleWomen for the first time. Tex and Jan had six children, fulfilling her childhood dream and securing the legacy the family business. As duty called Tex back and forth to his family’s ranches in central New Mexico and South Texas for the next twenty years, Jan made sure always to be a part of the local CattleWomen chapter, holding dual memberships as a New Mexico Cowbell and a Texas CattleWoman for many years. She is also a longtime member of National Cattlemen’s Beef Association, American National CattleWomen and the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association.

Jan has resided in Uvalde permanently since 1987 and has served in almost every office of the South Texas CattleWomen chapter, most frequently and currently as its President. Over the last twenty years, Jan has help lead the South Texas CattleWomen (STCW) to become one of the largest and most charitable chapters in Texas. Under Jan’s leadership, South Texas CattleWomen founded its signature event, Spikes ‘N Spurs, which benefits several children’s homes in South Texas by gifting \$30,000 annually in fresh beef. In a typical year, you will find Jan and her STCW chapter participating in many events such as Steaks for Troops by sponsoring, organizing and serving \$2,500 of steak meals to Wounded Warriors and donating \$1,000 annually to the Warrior and Family Support Center; volunteering at the San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo, donating \$2,500 each year to feed rodeo contestants beef meals, endorsing and sponsoring Miss Rodeo Texas with \$2,500 and gifting a \$1,000 scholarship for the Master of Beef Advocacy program to Miss Rodeo America; promoting the sale of Steaks for Father’s Day at their local HEBs by educating consumers on the importance of beef nutrition and collecting Christmas gifts for the Big Springs Children’s Home.

In 2007, under Jan's leadership, STCW became the official host of the Briscoe Ranch BBQ Cook-off. After learning that Uvalde was the home of the very first organized barbeque cooking competition in America in the 1970s, Jan knew STCW needed to help revive this while promoting Texas beef. Thirteen years ago, the inaugural cook-off brought eight teams to Uvalde. Last year, 165 teams took over Uvalde County Fairplex to compete in one of the largest and top-rated barbeque cooking competitions in Texas, attracting teams from over 1000 miles away. The event raises scholarship funds for ag students attending Southwest Texas Junior College and awards winners beef certificates donated by STCW. According to the producer of the event, Wade Carpenter, "Without the continued support and leadership by Jan Elliott, the cook-off would not be what it has become."

Even if she is not promoting beef in an official capacity, Jan is always a Cowgirl. She is the matriarch of Gates Espejo Ranch of Catarina, Texas and also El Bigote Ranch of Fort Sumner, New Mexico, the later owned and operated by her six children and their families. Since her husband's death, Elliott has been the sole member and operator of El Bigote Cattle Company, reestablished in 2017, this time in Burnet County Texas. Jan continues to honor the legacy and lifestyle of her late husband and the traditions passed down five generations with an Angus/Brangus cow/calf operation that still does it the old-fashioned way. Horses are used to gather and rotate cattle throughout the year and spring roundup is supported by "neighboring," where like-minded friends and family come together to complete the working of the calves. This time is devoted to sharing with the younger generations, the way it has always been. Jan is right in the middle of all these activities, supervising and encouraging all participants and having fun.

Off the ranch, Jan is promoting the ranching way of life. She is a founding member and donor of the Briscoe Western Art Museum in San Antonio and has been an active docent since its opening in 2013. You can often find her there, leading a tour, wearing her hat and spurs and making sure every child is engaged and leaves with a better understanding of the importance of the American cowboy. In 2018, Jan joined the Board of Directors of the National Ranching Heritage Center in Lubbock, Texas which has been promoting and preserving the ranching way of life since 1966.

In her local community, Jan is now and has always been involved. Her leadership qualities speak for themselves as she is continuously called upon to serve and has been named and nominated for Uvalde Volunteer of the Year several times. At the enthusiastic age of 74, she is currently serving on the boards of the First United Methodist Church of Uvalde, the St. Henry de Osso Family Project, the Uvalde Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Herby Ham Activity Center, the Texas High School BBQ Board, and is currently the President of Uvalde Republican Women. She is also one of the founding members of Uvalde Good Egg Productions, a group of women writers, directors and producers of the performing arts. Somehow she manages all of this while frequently traveling across Texas to attend the many events of her six children and nine grandchildren and occasionally to the New Mexico ranch to advise when necessary.

Jan's true passion is promoting the beef industry. Through raising good cattle and passing along the family legacies of stewardship, hard work, devotion, faith, family and friends she never hesitates to share any and all of these traits to anyone in which she comes in contact. It doesn't take her very long to tell you exactly how important beef is to a well-balanced diet and how important the beef industry is to Texas and the world. Jan Elliott embodies the idea of the cattlegirl in thought, word and deed everyday of her life and is most deserving of the Texas Cattlegirls Lifetime Achievement Award.

Submitted by Loving Friends from The South Texas Cattlegirls and The Tex Elliott Family