

# THE PULSE

Fall 2019 • Holstein Association USA, Inc.



**U.S. REGISTERED HOLSTEINS<sup>®</sup>**

THE WORLD'S PERFECT COW

The Pulse is proudly sponsored by



# TOTAL TEAMWORK

**T**he collective U.S. dairy industry has faced what appears to be insurmountable challenges in recent years. For some, a lifetime of family endeavor is evaporating before our eyes as we burn through farm equity due to an inability to generate enough income to pay bills.

It's in the face of these life storms we must regroup and form a workable solution. Through teamwork . . . and I mean total commitment from all parties . . . we can bring forth positive change to restore internal energy and farm profitability.

Total teamwork involves open communication, listening and being open to multiple strategies, developing a strong game plan, and then executing effective and efficient action. In some cases, seismic obstacles can be overcome. In other circumstances, our best human efforts cannot change the outcome even with the best intentions.

I am honored to serve as the 65th President of the Holstein Association USA. Many before me have prepared me for the fires we now face. Over the course of the next two years as President, we will actively engage all our committees to do the very best work for our members — the breeders and owners of the Holstein cow. These committees include Audit and Finance, Genetic Advancement, the rebranded Conformation Advisory, International Marketing, Legislative and Regulatory Affairs, Show, Junior Advisory, and Future Conventions. Each new member received a personal invitation. We talked through the vision. Everyone said, "Yes" to the call.

This teamwork will involve more face-to-face meetings and less conference calls. This teamwork will involve revamped committees that begin to reflect dairy's changing demographics as each committee will now include at least 20 percent women in each meeting. It's a start, and those percentages will grow in the coming years. Building on the legacy of our past presidents, our weekly calls with CEO John Meyer and Vice-President Jonathan Lamb will actively keep topics moving forward as we leave no stone unturned as we grapple with our dairy challenges.

Since we are the voice for the world's largest dairy breed organization, Holstein USA will spend more time in our nation's capital advocating for exports of embryos, live cattle, and semen. It's genetics that provides extra value to our members and the world wants our genetics. This new action by our teams will include having at least one board meeting each year in the Washington D.C. metroplex. We also will partner with other dairy organizations when we can improve our collective clout.

## We have a great story

From co-chairing the 2019 National Holstein Convention, and preparing over six years for that event, I witnessed that Holstein has an impressive story to share. When we share that story, others listen . . . others want to join us on our journey. That was evident as over 1,200 people from 38 states and 19 countries gathered in Appleton, Wis., to talk all things Holstein. That impressive convention experience only became possible due to total teamwork from 78 volunteers committed to a unified mission. Were there bumps along the way? You bet there were. Regrouping, discussing, and recalibrating the action plan kept us on the road to victory. Ultimately, how one reacts to life's storms dictates the outcome.

At the 2016 National Holstein Convention in New York, I shared with juniors how ten servant leaders molded me into the man I am today. One of those people was my father, Randy, a dairyman of 50 years. Every night as a child he passed my room and said, "Say your prayers." Throughout the years, I asked, "God, please put me in a position to help dairy farmers one day." I believe God answered that prayer and more. We have a great team at Holstein Association USA. We need to openly share ideas and pick potential winners.



## Soldier on

The storms of life also can build character. At the moment, my character construction continues to be molded. The man who constantly reminded me to say my prayers battled for 18 days for his earthly life as a result of a heart attack. This article was written in early September as my father, Randy, was in his third heart surgery to repair a two-inch hole between his left and right ventricle created by the attack.

After the hole in his heart formed, Randy drove home 1.4 miles in his tractor from where he was raking hay, Mom drove him 40 minutes to the heart center near to where this year's National Holstein Convention was held, and six hours later doctors discovered the hole in his heart. Flight for Life brought him to Milwaukee. While many would have succumbed to the pain and crumbled in that farm field, he soldiered on to seek help. In the obstacles of this 1 in 1,000 type heart attack, a 50-person medical team gathered, formed a strategy, and set forth a game plan. As I was wrapping up this article, Dr. Will Fischer, "the first-team draft pick surgeon" at Wisconsin's best heart hospital who had been working on my father for 18 days, and a chaplain rounded the corner.

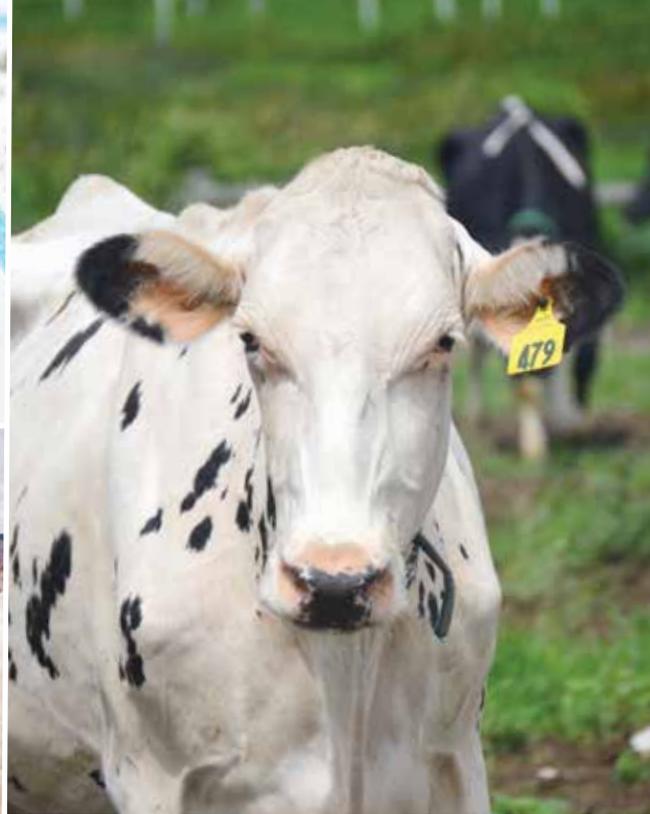
Their faces said everything. It's then, our family learned that all earthly options had been exhausted for my 69-year-old father. Later that day a "mighty oak" fell in the woods. That oak's seeds, in the form of deeds, will live on for generations to come.

During this 18-day medical marathon, I further honed my talents and once again witnessed this about teamwork — gather the best, debate vigorously with respect, and get the team moving briskly on a charted course. That approach is far better than wallowing in self-pity and self-doubt. With chins up and solid game plan, we will move forward over the next two years as a team. It's what my dad did when his own father passed when he was only 16 years old. He got busy living.

May God be with all of us in our endeavors, as we build upon the solid foundation of the Holstein breed and prepare for an even brighter future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Corey".

**Corey Geiger, President, Holstein Association USA, Inc.**



# STEADY GROWTH FOR REGISTERED HOLSTEINS®

Every August, I enjoy reviewing the statistics of each dairy breed associations' activities and the reports of their annual meetings in *Hoard's Dairyman* magazine. It serves as "sort of" a report card as to how we stacked up to our PDCA (Purebred Dairy Cattle Association) peers the preceding year. In this column, I'll review some of the areas in which your Association ranked quite well, and those in which we did not.

As always, the value of Registered Holsteins® shined brightly when compared to other breeds at their national convention sale. A total of 80 lots sold for an average of \$19,481. The next highest convention sale average took place at the National Jersey Heifer sale where they averaged \$10,308 on 35 lots. The lowest average sale took place at the Milking Shorthorn convention where 38 lots averaged \$1,453.

As you will see as you read on, there's typically quite a range between the high and low number in every category.

When looking at total identifications for each breed on a percentage change basis between 2017 and 2018,

your Holstein Association ranked second with a 0.8 percent increase. The Guernsey Association led the way in identification percentage increases with a 17.4 percent improvement. The Jersey Association showed the biggest decline with a reduction of 28.6 percent.

Examining transfers on a percentage basis, your Holstein Association didn't fare very well. We ranked fifth out of six on transfers, dropping 14.1 percent. The Ayrshire Association was the only one which showed a bigger drop, as their transfer numbers fell 17.9 percent. Two breeds

showed impressive improvements in this category, with the Milking Shorthorn Association paving the way with a 20.9 percent increase, and the Brown Swiss Association experiencing nine percent growth in transfers. All other breeds' transfer numbers declined.

Given the number of dispersals and other sales that took place in 2018, our transfer numbers were surprising



**As always, the value of Registered Holsteins® shined brightly when compared to other breeds.**

and disappointing, and even more so thus far this year. It's our hope that all who believe in the superiority of Registered Holsteins® and have benefited from the value that Holsteins provide would complete the transfer process when selling their Registered Holsteins.

Transfers are the best way to continue the legacy of breeding Registered Holsteins you have started. They also are an excellent way to help develop interest from new members and help them be more profitable. Let's do the right thing by transferring ownership of all of the Registered Holsteins you sell.

We ranked third in percentage change for the number of cows on production test, with an increase of 2.4 percent. The Jersey Association had the largest increase in this area, with an increase of 89.1 percent, followed by the Guernsey Association with an increase of 39.4 percent. Meanwhile, there were 30.6 percent fewer Milking Shorthorn cows on test in 2018 than 2017.

Our beloved Holstein cow continues to provide you more of what you're paid for, with production averages of 27,241 pounds, 305-2X ME, fat 1,052 pounds, and protein 836. On a percentage basis, your Holsteins showed a 0.2 percent increase in milk, 1.6 percent increase in fat, and 0.5 percent increase in protein.

The Ayrshire breed was the only one that had a higher increase on a percentage change basis in the milk, fat, and protein category, with increases of 4.6 percent, 6.2 percent, and 5.4 percent respectively. No other breeds showed increases in all three areas, and two breeds, Jersey and Milking Shorthorn, showed decreases in the production of milk, fat, and protein.

With the exception of Brown Swiss which showed a nice increase of 5.9 percent in animals classified, all other breeds showed decreases in this sector. We classified 6.9 percent fewer Holsteins in 2018 than 2017, which ranks us second. The Ayrshire and Jersey Associations' classification numbers dropped the most, each recording losses of nine percent.

It's good to know that every breed fared well in some categories. The numbers point out that each breed association has areas where improvement can be made. Constant-never-ending improvement has been our mantra here for years and will continue to be.

We look forward to continuing to assist you in your quest for constant-never-ending improvement at your dairy.

Best wishes during the Fall harvest season.



**John M. Meyer, Chief Executive Officer  
Holstein Association USA, Inc.**



## Online Transfer System Updates and Tips

At the Association, we are always looking for ways to improve our member/customers' experience. One of the ways we have made this experience better was updating and changing our online transfer system and process.

In December of 2018, our new online transfer system rolled out. We had seen an increase in customers' submitting transfers online. In part largely due to the popularity of the new buyer receiving a free updated certificate and not having to return the original.

In July of this year, we rolled out some additional improvements. The biggest improvements being the ability to transfer to multiple buyers, an account lookup feature and storing buyer information for the same transaction.

### SOME TIPS TO MAKE THE ONLINE TRANSFER PROCESS EVEN SMOOTHER:

1. Call customer service to help establish a username and password if needed
2. Ask the buyer for their Holstein Account number
3. Use the buyer account lookup feature
4. Be sure you received the transfer confirmation email and keep it for your records
5. Be aware of the Junior transfer deadline, June 1

**To access the online transfer system from Holstein USA's website [www.holsteinusa.com](http://www.holsteinusa.com):**

In the left-hand side of the website click on Animal Identification, then transfer. In the top right-hand side of the website, click on the banner, transfer animals online.

Log in using your username and password and follow the prompts to complete your transaction. If you need help with the process, a video tutorial is available, visit <http://bit.ly/2SnIO8r>.

A Holstein Association USA website login must be established to use the online transfer application system. If you would like assistance setting up a login, please contact customer service at 800.952.5200.



Reese Hansen

# SERVING CONSUMERS

An Iowa family provides farm-fresh dairy products courtesy of Registered Holsteins®.

**A** yellow school bus rolls down a dusty road outside the rural community of Hudson, Iowa.

The Hansen family's seventh-generation races their way inside the house as the screen door is left banging on its hinges. Backpacks are stowed away and shoes are quickly changed before the cousins are back outside to clamber onto their bicycles.

They are off to explore the farm.

"Having the kids here is amazing. They see a lot, and they have a lot of fun doing it," Blake Hansen says. "They are showing some responsibilities around the farm, doing their own chores."

His children, Reese and Beckett, are eager to help feed the bottle calves, and are all smiles as the herd's latest additions enjoy their afternoon meal.

## Family First

Hansen's Dairy Farm is the combined efforts of Blake, his three brothers and their parents. Together the family cares for 150 Registered Holsteins®, farms 450 acres and operates an on-farm creamery.

But most importantly — they are raising 15 members of the next generation.

"I hope it's instilling the value of hard work in them," Blake's wife Jordan says.

Blake and his brother Blair manage the milk bottling process, while oldest brothers, Brent and Brad, coordinate milk processing and delivery to the family's two retail store locations in Waterloo and Cedar Falls, Iowa. Many of the brothers' families are involved in the operation as well, helping with milking or calf chores.

"As a dairy farmer, it's not really a job. It's a lifestyle," Blake says. "There's so many different aspects of the operation that open doors to any family member having an interest."

Established in 1953 by his grandparents, Jack and Lorraine Hansen, the dairy was built on farm ground that's been in the family since 1864 when ancestors immigrated from Germany. With each passing generation, they've adapted to keep agricultural opportunities available for those with a passion to live on the land.

In the early 2000s, the family began discussing ways to diversify their small farm to allow more siblings to come back and raise their families. Their idea? Create an on-farm creamery and begin bottling their own milk.

That dream became a reality in 2004. Today, nearly 6,000 gallons of milk are processed every week and made into various types of milk, 25-plus ice cream flavors, cheese curds and butter.

"It's a pleasure to see the dairy products in someone else's hands," Blake says. "It's pure satisfaction to see the smiles on their faces when they take that first lick of ice cream."

## Building a Brand

Consumers can easily identify Hansen's Dairy Farm products in the store by their mascot: a kangaroo. Blake compares his kangaroos to Toucan Sam for Froot Loops™ or Tony the Tiger for Frosted Flakes®. Visitors to the farm can meet the actual kangaroos that inspired the cartoon label.

"It's definitely something that you don't see in Iowa," Jordan says. "It stands out rather than your typical cow on the label, and people have come to realize that about Hansen's Dairy."

The family also gives tours of their dairy and processing facility to promote their brand and educate consumers about how dairies operate. They built a welcome center in 2012 to accommodate large school and 4-H groups.

When they arrive, visitors ride a trolley down to the farm and tour on foot.

"People really enjoy learning about where their food comes from, especially when it's right in their backyard," Jordan says. "It's really a genuine, authentic experience."

The Hansens feel a responsibility to consumers to be open and transparent about how their product is produced, Jordan explains. The family strives to provide the highest quality and best-tasting product they can, and their connection with consumers allows them to receive feedback and make management decisions to improve product satisfaction.

## The Perfect Cow

For Blake, the Registered Holstein is the only cow equipped to supply the product his consumers love. From the very beginning, the family has been registering animals under the Jaywood prefix. The ability to trace family trees and look back on an animal's history is invaluable, Blake says.

"I'm a big believer in family trees and trying to make a cow better," he explains. "Trying to make them live longer, trying to get the most production out of them, and trying to give them a better life to live."

Along with longevity, Blake is also focused on breeding a cow that can maximize her potential and produce high components. Enrolled in Holstein COMPLETE® and TriStarSM, Blake is able to track information on his animals and compare them to other successful herds.

He makes breeding decisions off information received from Holstein Association USA reports. And in the future, Blake hopes his kids will also use pedigrees to make better management decisions and appreciate the history behind each cow family.

Whether it is managing the cows, crops or the retail side of the operation, at Hansen Dairy, family is at the heart of everything they do.

As the sun starts to inch toward the western horizon, Blake and his brothers gather at the welcome center. In the back of the center they meet their father and a game of racquetball sparks up. They discuss their triumphs and challenges for the day, but mostly they just spend time as a family.

"The brothers work with each other all day long, and they'll still hang out with each other," Jordan says. "This is what we do. It's our livelihood and everybody has a part in it."



Blake Hansen



**"It's definitely something that you don't see in Iowa. It stands out, rather than your typical cow on the label, and people have come to realize that about Hansen's Dairy."**

– Jordan Hansen –



## New Product Profile

**New!**

**Red  
Book  
Plus**

*Online*



## Powerful & Dynamic Tools for Holstein Breeders

**O**ne of the most important decisions dairy producers can make in terms of improving their herd genetics is selecting the right bulls to use to create their next generation. What tools do you use today to narrow down the thousands of choices and decide which bulls make it into your tank?

Holstein Association USA launched a new program this summer to help Holstein breeders further refine their breeding programs, simplify the process of finding information on bulls, and identifying which bulls best meet the needs of their herds - Red Book Plus Online.

Red Book Plus Online is a website that allows users to quickly and easily:

- find comprehensive information on Holstein bulls, including genetic traits, pedigree and ancestor/progeny performance information
- build and save custom lists and reports based on criteria that is important to them
- create personalized selection indexes to compare and rank bulls.

Red Book Plus Online is backed by the power of the Holstein Association USA herdbook - the gold standard in stewarding pedigree, genetic and performance information for Holstein cattle. Users will find complete information on all genetic traits, pedigree information, ancestor and progeny performance information, and more, for over 50,000 bulls, including the thousands of bulls being marketed by artificial insemination companies today. Red Book Plus Online provides modern, flexible and customizable searching and

reporting tools to help Holstein breeders find those right bulls to fit their goals.

As the name suggests, Red Book Plus Online is web-based, as opposed to a program installed on individual computers. Because it is web-based, the program can be accessed from any computer, tablet or smartphone with an internet connection.

If you are familiar with the longstanding desktop version of the Red Book Plus/MultiMate software, Red Book Plus Online has a dramatically redesigned user experience that is more streamlined and much easier to navigate, helping you find the information you are looking for much more efficiently. Further, Red Book Plus Online contains many new traits that are not available in desktop Red Book Plus/MultiMate, including Cow Livability, Beta Casein A2, Kappa Casein, CDCB Health Traits, Zoetis Wellness Traits, and more.

### Core Features

Red Book Plus Online is designed to not just allow users to simply find information, but also help them interpret and understand it. Read on to learn more about the key features of Red Book Plus Online.

**Quick Bull Search** – enter all or part of a bull's name, NAAB code or registration number to quickly jump to his individual information page. Search results are automatically sorted to bring the most relevant bulls to the top of the results, and the overall experience results in the quickest way to lookup information on individual sires available anywhere.





Charlie Hamilton, Cuba City, Wis.

# HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Welcoming back the next generation during dairy's toughest times.

**M**orning light streams into a dairy parlor in southwestern Wisconsin.

Slow at first, and then suddenly the entire barn appears to glow — signaling to Charlie Hamilton and his mother, Evie, that it is approaching 9 a.m. They are nearly done with the day's first milking.

Setting their clock by the cow's routine, dairy cattle are part of their past, present and future at Hill-Ton Holsteins, the family's farm near Cuba City, Wis.

"It's just a passion for the Holstein cow," Evie says. "Developing pedigrees, and seeing when calves are born and develop into beautiful cows."

As the last of the morning's milk pours into the tank, feed is mixed for delivery to the hardworking cows. Their comfort and care come first. Seeing they are quiet and content, Charlie adjusts his bright-red University of Wisconsin ball cap, and moves swiftly to the next job.

"I grew up here on this farm, and I have my memories around the farm," he says. "And I really think that's helped define who I am."

## A future in dairy

At 22-years-old, Charlie had a choice. It was May 2018, and he was graduating with a bachelor's degree in dairy science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He could pursue a career in the dairy industry or return home to the family's farm.

While he couldn't imagine life any other way, the decision was not a simple one. In a time when

challenges outweigh optimism in the dairy business, Charlie had to consider all aspects of the operation.

"For the last couple years I've played the devil's advocate," Evie said. "I've thrown at him many scenarios. I never wanted him to come home because he felt he had to come home. I wanted him to because that's what he wanted."

Charlie graduated on a Saturday and was back home milking cows 12 hours later.

"I never stopped caring about what was happening here every day, and that's how I knew that I wanted to come back home," he says.

## Uncertain times

Many dairy families are facing tough decisions about the future. USDA reports that 590 Wisconsin dairy farms closed in 2018; and the nationwide number fell by more than 2,700 farms.

Fewer farms has not meant a decrease in milk production however. Operations of the future will look different.

For young people, like Charlie, this can be a major obstacle or present a new opportunity — with Registered Holsteins®, the family believes there's hope.

"The dairy economy is not the greatest right now to be looking to advance, but we can't always pick the situations," says John Hamilton, Charlie's father. "The registered end is going to be a big plus on this place."

An appreciation for the Holstein cow was instilled in Charlie from a young age. His first calf, Charlene, was from Evie's family's farm and several of his cows still trace back to her lineage.

## Set apart by Holsteins

Charlie's parents encouraged him to get involved with the local Junior Holstein Association when he was about 7-years-old. Once he started competing in the showing, he was hooked.

During his time in the National Junior Holstein Association, Charlie took advantage of every opportunity he could to learn and grow. Public speaking, Dairy Jeopardy, Dairy Bowl and many other contests were ways he showcased his knowledge and passion for the business.

"What I love most about the Registered Holstein industry is the comradery that we as breeders share," Charlie says. "And that goes back to the friendships I've made through the association that I look forward to maintaining throughout life."

Because of his commitment and passion for the Holstein breed, Charlie was named a National Distinguished Junior Member — the highest honor for a youth member of Holstein Association USA. He was also named the Wisconsin Holstein Boy his final year as a junior.

The knowledge and leadership skills he developed through the Junior Holstein Association led Charlie to a number of industry experiences and honors, where he broadened his view of dairy production and his future.

"He was on the championship National Dairy Challenge team, and I said, now comes the real challenge...the challenge of life," John says. "Now you've got to make this place work."

## Live to dream, work to succeed

"Our farm motto is 'Live to dream, work to succeed,' and we all try to embody that with everything that we do," Charlie explains.

The family's motto is on display in the milk barn; one of the first things they see before checking on the cows.

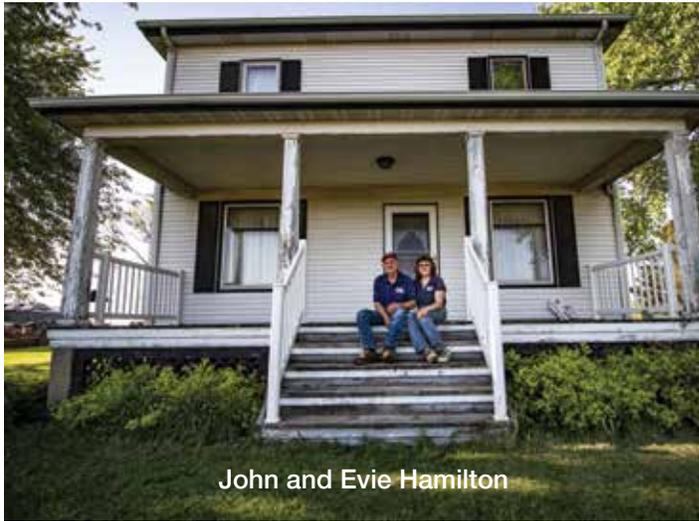
"I've always been a dreamer. Right from meeting my wife and working with the Registered Holstein," John says.

The first year Holstein Association USA presented Herd of Excellence awards, Hill-Ton Holsteins was among those honored for having an elite, homebred herd. The herd was recognized as a two-year honoree this year.

Now as Charlie begins to chart his own course for the

future of the dairy and farming operation, he understands it won't be easy.

"I've had to step up and put my best foot forward to help keep the farm going," Charlie says. "I decided that if this is what I want to do that I need to work for it. And I think that is a passion that is really going to drive me forward."



John and Evie Hamilton

Charlie believes his passion and the advantages of the Registered Holstein will help the farm begin to market genetics in addition to producing milk. Since his return home, they've grown the herd from 65 to 85 cows and are finalizing plans to build a new freestall barn.

"Making milk is the whole core of the dairy industry," Charlie says. "The Holstein cow has been bred and developed as the perfect milk-making animal, and has been tremendous for us in being profitable with our management style."

## The next chapter

As Charlie opens a gate to the pasture, the cows jump to attention.

He walks through the green grass and is suddenly surrounded by a dozen curious animals. They greet him like a family member, nuzzling his arms and following his every move.

It's no surprise: these are Charlie's cows. They enjoy his presence, and his deep-felt laughter and smile show he feels the same.

Across the pasture, John and Evie sit on the porch of the farmhouse where John was raised. His father still resides there today. The weathered stairs have supported the family through some of the industry's most challenging times. Now Charlie, the fourth generation, will begin his own chapter of the story.

"He will always be my little boy," Evie says. "I want him to be able to look back and be happy he made the decision he did, when he was 22-years-old and fresh out of the gate. That he can look back and say it was a good life."

