

Judges for the 2014 Western Regional Taxidermy Competition

Fish, Reptiles and Amphibians: Jeff Mourning - World Champion

Jeff started competing in 1997, then after several years of competing he started judging in 2001. He is honored to have judged at many State, National and World Championships, including the European Championships. The biggest highlight of his judging career is helping the competitors; He hopes they learn from him as much as he learned from other judges. He feels fortunate to have won many awards over the years, to which he credits every judge that taught him. Some of his major awards include: 8 World titles (4 Best in the World, 4 Second in the World), 2 Carl Akeley Awards (one gold and one silver), 10 National and North American Champions, 15 Best of Show Awards, National Best of Show 2003, 2 National Distinguished Taxidermist Awards, 1st Place Challenge of the Art 2003, 2 World Championship Competitors Awards, 4 WASCO Awards, 1st Larry Jensen Memorial Award, Jonas Award for Art, and one of the first to earn Award of Excellence in all four fish categories.

Birds: Dale Manning - World Champion

Dale has been involved with taxidermy since 1975. Born and raised in Missoula, Montana, he grew up hunting, fishing and camping. His high school job was working at a local taxidermy shop where his primary interest began with birds. The quality of his work from the beginning allowed him to mount birds for other taxidermists across Montana which was his main source of income as he pursued his college degree. Dale graduated in 1985 from the University of Montana with a B.S. in Finance and a Minor in Economics.

In 1988, Dale and his business partner, John Ottman, opened a wholesale bird shop, *Custom Birdworks*. With its success and the demand for big game taxidermy, the *Big Game Connection* was added to the business. *Custom Birdworks and the Big Game Connection, Ltd.* later became a full service taxidermy studio solely owned by Dale.

Dale is known for producing the highest quality taxidermy that emphasizes the profession as an art. Keeping up with the industry changes and technologies by attending taxidermy conventions and competitions throughout the country is a priority and part of his business philosophy to produce an excellent product. Dale is well respected in the taxidermy community for his knowledge. He has received the industry's highest honors and awards at the state, national and world level. Dale won Best in World Waterfowl at the World Taxidermy Championships in Springfield, Illinois.

Dale lives in Missoula, Montana, with his wife Jennifer and son Owen.

Whitetail Deer and Game Heads: [Joe Meder](#) - World Champion

Joe has won numerous national and world taxidermy championship awards, and has judged and conducted seminars in numerous National and World Taxidermy Competitions, including Norway, Finland, France, Italy and Austria competitions sponsored by the European Taxidermy Federation.

Joe served as president of the National Taxidermists Association and received the Award of Excellence given by the NTA. He is also a lifetime member of the National Taxidermists Association and Safari Club International, and was an SCI Master Measurer.

Many of Joe's mounts have been featured on the front cover of both taxidermy and hunting magazines, and he has mounted many world-record whitetail deer, including the original Jordan, the Hole in the Horn, and the Breen. He sculpts and sells whitetail deer forms through McKenzie Taxidermy Supply using whitetail deer from his research pen as reference. Joe is widely recognized for his expertise in mounting large game, including North American and African species.

Joe has taught [taxidermy classes](#) at his studio in Solon, Indiana, for the past 30 years, and a high number of Joe's students have won state, national and world competition awards in the game head category.

Mule Deer and Lifesize: [Ashley Barrett](#) - World Champion

Ashley is 32 years old and lives in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, with his wife, Tiffany, and daughter, Fallon. While enjoying the diverse seasons in Pennsylvania, Ashley enjoys archery hunting, fishing, boating, and hiking with the family dog, Moose.

Ashley's father, Steve, operates Critter Creations Taxidermy. That is where Ashley got his start in taxidermy and currently works full time, specializing in mammals. He began doing taxidermy and competing at the age of 14 and has been competing or judging every year since; This allows him to learn from many of the best taxidermists in the world, all of which helped him win "Best in World" title for Large Mammal and the "First Place Competitor's Award" in 2009 at St. Charles, Missouri.

Youth and Novice: [Scott Humble](#) - World contender

Scott is no doubt the BEST teacher for anyone new or old to taxidermy, he has an amazing skill level like no other. He is a Utah Master Taxidermist in ALL Categories and has won almost every award possible. His commitment to quality and realism is exceptional. Scott served as UTA President for many years, and continues to serve the association in numerous ways. For those of you undecided to compete, you are missing out not getting to know or be judged/critiqued by Scott.