



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Hardin County Extension News Release

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Ag Hall of Fame to Induct New Members

Hardin County – The Hardin County Agriculture Hall of Fame has announced the 2015 honorees, to be inducted at the thirteenth annual Agriculture Hall of Fame recognition banquet. The 2015 inductees include: Clinton Archie McNutt and Family, Thomas E. Sprang, Robert L. White, and Merritt & Hazel Wilson. The banquet will be held on Tuesday, December 1st, beginning at 6:30 pm at St. John's United Church of Christ on East Carrol Street in Kenton. The public is invited to come to honor these inductees and their families, and to recognize their many accomplishments.

The purpose of the county Agriculture Hall of Fame is to recognize outstanding agricultural contributions by Hardin County people and to honor those who have brought distinction to themselves and the agricultural industry. Gary Jackson will present the keynote address. Jackson is an award winning farm broadcaster and multi-media guru who brings a wealth of knowledge and an unbiased look at how business and agriculture are linked to the economic growth of our great state.

Clinton Archie McNutt graduated from Forest High School. He attended The Ohio State University, where he earned a 2-year certificate. Known to others as Archie McNutt, he was a lifetime farmer. In addition, he was a veterans' class instructor at Mt. Victory for 15-20 years, an active community leader, and early innovator and promoter of alfalfa production, making hay for many Hardin County farmers on the halves. He married his wife Mildred and together they had seven sons and one daughter. All seven sons received the State Farmer Degree. All of the sons were college graduates, and their daughter became a nurse. Archie and Mildred raised this family on 138 acres. The family careers included county agents, a veterinarian who was also president of the state veterinary association, an insurance instructor, vocational agriculture and other school teachers, as well as a radio and television agriculture contributor.

McNutt served on the Hardin County Fair Board from 1943-57, was a charter member of the Hardin County Farm Bureau Board of Directors and also a Farm Bureau Council member. He was recognized

with the Farm Bureau Distinguished Service Award. Receiving the FFA's State Farmer Degree himself, he was a major supporter of Dunkirk and Hardin Northern Vocational Agriculture and FFA, where he also served on the Hardin Northern Board of Education. McNutt belonged to the Dunkirk Masonic Lodge, served as Dunkirk PTA President, and was a strong supporter of the band boosters. He was a board member of the Hardin Soil and Water Conservation District and was a member of the Grange. He received the Purple Heart in World War I for an injury in Europe, and was a member of both the American Legion and VFW. McNutt was both a Blanchard and Jackson Township Trustee, served as Patterson Methodist Church Superintendent and Sunday school teacher in addition to being on the rebuilding committee after the church burned.

Thomas E. Sprang graduated from McGuffey High School in 1963. Tom, as he was known to family and friends, started farming with his father and brother-in-law when he was still in high school. His farming operation grew to 170 acres that he owned and another 600 acres that he rented with his son Scott. In addition to farming, Tom worked at Rockwell/Meritor until he retired in 2002. He was a supervisor with the Hardin County Soil and Water Conservation District, and also served the Indian Lake Watershed Board as a representative for Hardin County landowners. Tom was also a Lynn Township Trustee, making sure township ditches were properly maintained and snow was plowed from the roads in the winter.

Sprang was also busy helping youth as an advisor to the Lynn Valley 4-H Club for 32 years. A member of the Hardin County Cattlemen's Association, he was presented with the Cattlemen's Service Award. During fair week he could be seen working at the Steak Barn at the Hardin County Fair. He served as president of the Hardin County MRDD board. He also served as treasurer of the Kenton Moose Family Center. He was also president of St. John's United Church of Christ Council. He was a member of the Quest Federal Credit Union, serving 25 years on the credit committee. He also served on the Farm Credit Services Advisory Board. Sprang enjoyed working to maintain classic and antique farm tractors and equipment as a member of the Hardin County Restorers & Collectors Club.

Robert L. White graduated from Mt. Victory Dudley High School in 1961. Bob has been a farmer, a licensed insurance agent and CEO of Ohio State Grange Members Service Corporation, and had worked at Rockwell International for 19 ½ years. He was awarded the Honorary Chapter Farmer Degree by the Kenton FFA in 1986, named Hardin County 'Citizen of the Year' in 2009, had the 4th of July Fireworks Show dedicated to him in 2014, and was also recognized for his years of service to the Hardin County Fair. He was inducted into the Hardin County Sports Hall of Fame in 2015. He is best known for his work with the Grange, where he is currently serving as Ohio State Grange President. He has served as Grange Youth Director and was instrumental in making the Hardin County OSU Extension Levy successful as chairman of that effort in 2009. He has testified to the U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee on the farm bill, and before the Ohio Legislative Committees numerous times on agricultural and rural issues. He was on the national installation team that organized the Alaskan Grange, and has served on the National Grange Task Force to revitalize the Grange organization.

White has served on many boards, including the Ohio State Grange Executive Board where he also served as Northwest Ohio District membership director, Commodity Futures Trading Commission Ag Advisory Committee, Hardin Community Federal Credit Union, Hardin Memorial Hospital Board, Hardin Sheep Improvement Association Board, Southeast Hardin Ambulance Board, BKP Ambulance Board, Ridgemont School Board, Hi-Point Joint Vocational Board, Hardin Senior Citizens Board, Hardin ESC Board, Farm Bureau Board, Extension Advisory Board, and Mt. Victory Dudley School Memorial Hall Board. In addition to these boards, he has been a member and served in many leadership roles of the Painter Creek and Pomona Granges, Ohio Farmers Union, Hardin Lions Club, LaRue Methodist Church, and LaRue Masonic Order of Masons. He has served as a Dudley Township Trustee and a member of Zoning Board in addition to serving the Hardin County Board of Elections as a poll worker. He has also served as a member of the Democratic County Central Committee.

Merritt and Hazel Wilson both graduated from Forest High School. Merritt attended an OSU Winter Short Course to learn about agriculture while Hazel attended Bliss Commercial College to become a commercial teacher. Merritt was a third generation farmer, raising hogs, sheep, and registered dairy cattle. Hazel was well known for her huge vegetable gardens, egg producing flock of chickens, poultry meat sales, and her total involvement with the farming operation even after the death of her husband. Merritt hosted dairy judging contests featuring his prized Jersey cows and land judging contests for FFA chapters. He willingly shared his knowledge of animal husbandry, farm and soil management programs, farm engineering, feed practices, and keeping production records of each cow. Hazel was the record keeper of the total household and farming operation, using analysis from The Ohio State University Extension Service and the United States Department of Agriculture from 1930-1968. Her flock of 1100 White Leghorn chickens produced eggs for a hatchery, while extra poultry were sold for customer orders to feed local families. Grade A milk from the family dairy herd was sold to Sealtest and San-A-Pure Dairy where it was tested for butterfat, processed, and distributed.

Merritt was a member of Hardin County Jersey Cattle Club, Forest IOOF Lodge, and served as an advisor to the Forest Boys Victory Livestock 4-H club. He was also a member of the Wyandot-Hardin Camp of Gideon's International, while Hazel belonged to the auxiliary organization. Hazel was a member of the Hardin County Genealogy Society, a charter member of the Extension Homemakers Council, as well as a charter member of the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 259. She was also recognized for being an Ohio poll worker for 25 years and was featured in a 1993 Kenton Times article, recognizing her as an 'Unsung Hero' for her work in local prisons through the Bill Glass Prison Ministry Team. Her prison work has been featured in both print and pictures in the book Doin' Time by author Rick Nielson and photographer Ron Kuntz. She received the Meritorious Service Award from the Canton Christian Home, a Church of Christ based nursing home. Both Merritt and Hazel were active members of the Blanchard River Church of Christ, Hardin Farm Bureau Council, American Jersey Cattle Club, and Purebred Dairy Cattle Association's National Honor Roll for herd development and butterfat production. The Ohio Dairyman's Association recognized the Wilson farm on the DHIA Honor Roll for production of milk fat in 365 days. Their farm is recognized as a Century Farm by both the Ohio Farm Bureau and the Ohio Department of Agriculture. In October 2015, the Wilson Homestead celebrated its 150 years of only Wilsons named on the deed and only Wilsons living on the farm.

Tickets for the Hardin County Agriculture Hall of Fame Banquet must be purchased in advance. Tickets are \$12, and available at the Hardin County Extension office (419-674-2297), or from the committee members: Andrew Flinn, Robert McBride, Ruth Oates, Kerry Oberlitner, Paul Ralston, Don Spar, Luke Underwood, Robert Wood, and Mark Badertscher.