

National 4-H Hall of Fame 2006

Iowa



Max Exner

State Music Specialist, 4-H Song Arranger & Composer

Home: Ames, Iowa

Nominated by: Iowa 4-H

Major 4-H Efforts:

Began his extension career in NY prior to WWII, and moved to Ames, Iowa, as extension State Music Specialist from 1947-1980. Arranged eight popular 4-H songs and took The Chamber Singers of Iowa State to Chicago to record "Songs of the 4-H Clover" album. Edited a companion song book and the 1968 revision of the National 4-H Songbook. Compositions have been printed by seven publishers, including the 4-H songs, "I Have Just One" and "There Is a First Time for Everything." His anthem "I Have a Dream" was approved by the Martin Luther King Foundation.

Biography:

Composer, director, folk dancer, poet - these only begin to describe Max Exner. He began his extension career in NY prior to WWII, and moved to Ames, Iowa, where he served as extension State Music Specialist from 1947-1980. Exner conducted statewide leadership training for community, church and youth leaders in singing, music appreciation and folk dancing. He directed statewide festivals and led music and dramatic productions for several youth organizations and camps. Exner directed the Iowa State 4-H Chorus at the annual state 4-H boy's and girl's conferences.

Exner arranged eight popular 4-H songs and took The Chamber Singers of Iowa State to Chicago to record them. The resulting album, "Songs of the 4-H Clover," was sold nationwide by National 4-H Supply Service in 1963. He also edited a companion song book. In 1968 he edited the revision of the National 4-H Songbook. His desire was to encourage singing at 4-H club meetings and events - especially 4-H songs. His compositions include the 4-H songs, "I Have Just One" and "There Is a First Time for Everything." His anthem, "I Have a Dream" was approved by the Martin Luther King Foundation. Folk songs he learned while bicycling through the Alps appeared in songbooks, and his compositions have been printed by seven publishers.

Quote:

"Most of all I remember my years with the State 4-H Choruses. I remember our beating ourselves to a frazzle putting on a State 4-H girls' conference, and the very next week a boys' conference. Wow! I must add that I have never directed groups of finer, more intelligent, and better motivated young people than those choruses. Two hour rehearsals in Memorial Union, and that before air-conditioning. And never a complaint or flagging of effort!"

Photos:



Max leads a music appreciation workshop for teen 4-H members.



4-H girls' chorus - one of the many Max conducted in his career.



Max rings the church bell for peace in Ames. He directed choirs for over 70 years.