

# National 4-H Hall of Fame 2011

## Kansas



**Bill Riley**  
President, Kansas 4-H Foundation

**Home:** Manhattan, Kansas

**Nominated by:** Kansas 4-H

**Major 4-H Accomplishments:**

Charter Member of the Farmington 4-H Club, Washington Co., KS. Associate Director and later President of the Kansas 4-H Foundation. Built the Kansas 4-H Foundation into the largest privately funded 4-H foundation in the nation (2005).

**Honors:** Received Kansas 4-H Wall of Fame award for "visionary leadership of the Kansas 4-H Foundation and personal commitment to Kansas 4-H." (2011). Oak Leaf Award for Global Leadership from The Nature Conservancy. Special Leadership Commendation Award, Colorado Association of Fund Raisers. International Award of Merit, Acacia International Fraternity. Presidents Award, Pyramid Society. L. R. Perry Award, Kansas Gymnastics Coaches Association.

**Biography:**

Bill Riley is a Charter Member of the Farmington 4-H Club in Washington Co. He became the Kansas 4-H Foundation Director responsible for Rock Springs 4-H Center, Lake Perry 4-H Camping Center, Southwest 4-H Camp and the Kansas 4-H Journal. In 1977 he left to direct the Arabian Horse Trust, but in 1985 he returned to lead the nation's first successful privately funded multimillion-dollar state 4-H Foundation campaign. In 1986 he was named foundation president. Bill created four 4-H endowments to support programming, scholarships and internships, Rock Springs and the Foundation Future Fund. He planned for the future by creating a site plan for Rock Springs, an investment management system and a board recruitment and orientation model now used by other nonprofits.

Leadership Lodge, the Flint Hills Environmental Education Center, Hilltop Housing Area and 300-acre addition were among major projects completed at Rock Springs during his tenure as President. Bill retired in 2005, leaving the largest privately funded 4-H foundation in the nation. Bill's continues to serve as member or chairman of several state and national foundation boards and consult on board governance. He mentors 4-H alumni through his endowed academic/leadership 4-H Riley Fellowship. Bill and his wife Erma, who he at Rock Springs 4-H Center, continue to use their financial resources, time, energy and talents to support Kansas 4-H. They have three children, all former 4-Hers, and four grandchildren.

**Quote:**

I was fortunate the Kansas 4-H Foundation gave me opportunity to work in support of the 4-H program...a program I feel has demonstrated the unparalleled potential for developing adults we want to work and live with from our young people! An effectively implemented 4-H experience can provide the life skill development essential for a successful adult leadership role in our society. To work in support of that vision was an honor and privilege enriched by the leadership, support, mentoring and confidence I received from others throughout my career. They motivated me as they modeled the values of 4-H every day.



Bill Riley poses in front of the Rock Springs 4-H Center sign as a young 4-H camper. He later worked there and met his wife Erma.



Bill and Erma Riley share their enduring love for and mission to preserve the natural environment with young people. Erma serves as a 4-H Dog Club volunteer.



Bill and Erma Riley dance to delight the over 400 guests at the 4-H Emerald Circle Banquet, the annual state 4-H project and scholarship banquet.