

Mississippi – 2010



Hometown: Richland, MS
Nominated by: Mississippi 4-H
Year Inducted: 2010

During the 4-H Centennial in 2002, he led in allotting ground to Mississippi 4-H for the Mississippi 4-H Learning Center and Museum. At this facility, 4-H educational programs and 4-H history are provided for thousands of visitors and more than 30,000 children annually.

Spell chairs the Mississippi Fair Commission, playing a leading role in all state fair events and activities, including supporting 4-H livestock and horse shows and the 4-H Village showcasing all facets of 4-H. In this role, he also hosts the Dixie National Livestock Show, the largest livestock show east of the Mississippi River that annually provides some \$250,000 in scholarships to 4-H and FFA youth. He is co-chairman of the Mississippi Land Water and Timber Resources Board, and through this board 4-H received a grant to develop a statewide, web-based, educational on-site program to promote 4-H in Mississippi.

Quote: I will forever be grateful to my parents and 4-H leaders for encouraging me and taking the time to teach me the values and skills that have served me well. 4-H gave me many opportunities and experiences that I would never have had otherwise. In my career I have tried to repay that debt by supporting 4-H and taking the time to help and encourage young people.

Lester Spell

Mississippi Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce

4-H Efforts: Richland 4-H Club member in swine and dairy, 1956-63; National 4-H Congress Leadership Project winner. Serves on the State 4-H Advisory Council. Led in the allotting of ground for the Mississippi 4-H Learning Center and Museum.

Honors: Mississippi Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce, 1995-present. First mayor of Richland, MS. Captain, U.S. Army. President of Rankin Chamber of Commerce, Southern U.S. Trade Assn., Southern Assn. of State Departments of Agriculture, Mississippi Municipal League, Mississippi Fruit & Vegetable Growers Assn., and Mississippi Veterinary Medical Assn. Co-chair, Mississippi Land Water and Timber Resources Board. Mississippi Veterinarian of the Year. MS Municipal League Hall of Fame inductee.

Lester Spell was a member of the Richland 4-H Club from 1956-63. He was active in swine and dairy and was a National 4-H Congress Leadership Project winner. He remains a local and state level 4-H donor, serves on the State 4-H Advisory Council and is a voice for 4-H statewide and across the South. As state Commissioner of Agriculture, the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum falls under his leadership.