

National 4-H Hall of Fame 2018

NAE4-HA



Keith Martikainen

Extension 4-H Youth Specialist, Past NAE4-HA President

Home: Hastings, NE Email: kr_martikainen@charter.net
Nominated by: NAE4-HA

Major 4-H Accomplishments:

10 year Harrison Maine member in dairy, woodworking, photo, citizenship, and leadership. IFYE host, local club president, county junior leader club president. Eastern States Exposition dairy delegate 3 years in ring and judging team. National 4-H Congress in leadership, "Report to the Nation" team candidate, Congress workshop facilitator, invited to repeat at National 4-H Conference. Term as County Extension board youth representative.

Honors: NAE4-HA President, 1996-97. 4-H Distinguished Service Award (1983), ESP State Distinguished Service Award (2001), NAE4-HA Meritorious Service Award (2002).

Biography:

A strong advocate for professional development, Keith spent his term as NAE4-HA president in 1996-97 encouraging and stretching Extension 4-H Professionals to gain and use new skills for reaching youth and strengthening NAE4-HA. Keith saw the end results of an innovative NAE4-HA board structure that offered more professionals an opportunity to learn and grow while serving NAE4-HA membership. A process that took nearly six years has now been in place nearly 20 years. Throughout the process, Keith was the constant catalyst encouraging the change. The outcome of this dedication has seen NAE4-HA membership steadily grow from 3,000 in 1996 to a record of over 4,000 members representing all 50 states in 2018.

Keith first served in Minnesota 4-H, where he developed a six hour TV series on youth business that aired on PBS in three states. The shows were made available to club members on tapes. He served on the MN 4-H Program Advisory Committee, MN 4-H Horse Committee, MN 4-H Foundation Board of Trustees and the 1984 National 4-H Conference planning committee. In Nebraska 4-H, Keith provided leadership for the State and District Communications contests. Due to his changes, participation grew by nearly 400% in the state contest, and district to state nominee dropout rate went from 19% to less than 2%. He served on National 4-H Congress Design Team 1993-2001 and chaired PILD Conference in 1998. Keith retired in 2002 after over 25 years of 4-H service.

Quote:

I'm humbled and incredibly blessed to have worked and/or been friends with more than a quarter of all 4-H laureates since 2002, and other 4-H professionals I know who will be. I feel like Major Richard Winters in the HBO mini-series 'A Band of Brothers,' the true story of the 101st Airborne Division's Easy Company during World War II. He said his grandson asked him: "Grandpa, were you a hero in the war? No, I answered, but I served in a company of heroes." I am proud to say that I served in the company of incredible 4-H heroes.



Sitting with Nebraska DSA winners after presenting their plaques at 1st Galaxy Conference.



Chairing a session as Regional Director at 1988 NAE4-HA conference in Minneapolis.



"Arrested" by deputy sheriff to serve fundraising time in a mall jail for charity. No, really!

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Vernon Waldren
NAE4-HA President/Extension Educator

Home: Papillion, NE Email: waldren@cox.net Nominated by: NAE4-HA

Major 4-H Accomplishments:

Member of the Go Getters 4-H Club in Greeley County. Devoted 37-years with Nebraska Extension in the Omaha metro area, Sarpy and Douglas Counties. Areas of focus included leadership, STEM and citizenship education. Assisted with the first NAE4-HA website; Chair of Programs Committee; NAE4-HA Treasurer, 1994 to 1996; President-elect, 1999; NAE4-HA president, 2000-2001. Honors: NAE4-HA President 2001; NAE4-HA: Distinguished Service Award, Meritorious Service Award, 25 years of Service. NAE4-HA – Treasurer, 1994 to 1996. University of Nebraska – Lincoln Extra Mile Award, 2001. Kansas 4-H Member Awards: National 4-H Conference Delegate, 1972. Kansas Key Award, 1971.

Biography:

Vernon was a member of the Go Getters 4-H Club in Greeley Co., KS. He devoted 37-years with Nebraska Extension developing, teaching and facilitating youth and adult volunteers to become leaders. His career was in Sarpy and Douglas Counties in the Omaha metro area, with programs including leadership, STEM and citizenship education. He served as 4-H educator and unit leader. In 1977, Vernon attended his first NAE4-HA conference. He later assisted with the first NAE4-HA website. As Chair of Programs Committee, he successfully introduced program task force teams to the current system. Vernon served as the NAE4-HA Treasurer from 1994-1996. Elected president-elect in 1999, he served on a 12-member board to re-evaluate the Board's structure.

Vernon's presidency launched the new Board structure, which still exists today. Vernon's tenure strengthened partnerships with National 4-H Council and 4-H Headquarters. He served on USDA 4-H Headquarters' 4-H Name and Emblem Working Group. He gave leadership as JCEP Liaison for Galaxy in 2003. In 2011, Vernon served as a tri-chair for the NAE4-HA Conference in Omaha. In retirement he is serving as the executive director for the Douglas/Sarpy Friends of Extension & 4-H Foundation. He was on the team that created the foundation in 2003. He co-developed "Boardsmanship" curriculum for non-profit groups and he serves on the Nebraska Association of County Extension Boards. Vernon continues to serve 4-H and extension.

Quote:

4-H has been a part of my entire life. In fact, I went to my first 4-H meeting before I was born. What I learned I have applied in my career as an extension educator. My mentors as a 4-H member treated me as a valuable part of the 4-H system. That philosophy helped create my philosophy concerning youth; young people are resources for 4-H and not just for teaching. My goal was to include youth in leadership roles. My goal is to include everyone in the system as resources so we have a better educational/extension/4-H system. I find value in mentoring the next generation of professionals while encouraging all professionals to continue making the best better!



Brothers Deryl and Vernon Waldren at Greeley County Kansas 4-H awards banquet, 1971.



2001 NAE4-HA National Board with Vernon Waldren, President (center).



4-H is part of the Waldren family. 2013 National 4-H Lifetime Volunteer Award to Mildred Waldren, with Deryl, Cheri and Vernon Waldren.