

# National 4-H Hall of Fame 2015

## NIFA



### **Alma Cobb Hobbs**

**Deputy Assistant Secretary, USDA (Retired)**

Home: Farmville, NC

Nominated by: NIFA

#### **Major 4-H Accomplishments:**

North Carolina 4-H member 4 years. 4-H Youth Agent, NC (1970-73) & TN (1974-79); 4-H State Specialist/Program Leader, TN State Univ. (1981-89); USDA Assistant Deputy for 4-H (1990-94), Deputy Administrator for Families, 4-H and Nutrition, (1994-2004).

**Honors:** USDA Superior Service Award, Epsilon Sigma Phi Certificate of Meritorious Service, National 4-H Achievement, Distinguished Service Award; NAE4-HA Distinguished Service Award, 1993. Reality Dare to Lead award from the International Leadership Network, 2003. National Recognition for 2002 4-H Centennial Celebration, National 4-H Strategic Plan.

#### **Biography:**

Dr. Alma Hobbs' career spanned 36 years: 4-H Agent, Bertie Co., NC (1970-73); Davidson Co., TN (1974-79); TN State Univ. Specialist (1981-88) and 1890 Administrator (1989-90); USDA Asst. Deputy for 4-H (1990-94), Deputy Administrator, Families, 4-H and Nutrition (1994-2004); Special Asst. to the Secretary (2004-06); Dean of Agriculture, Virginia State Univ. (2006-09); and Deputy Asst. Secretary, USDA, (2009-2013). Her strong work ethic and commitment to service empowered her to succeed in 4-H and beyond. After passage of the Civil Rights Act, she worked to integrate Bertie Co. 4-H by taking the first Black 4-H team to the state competitions. Her efforts opened doors for equal access to opportunities for all youth.

Dr. Hobbs' strategies to increase minority participation raised membership from 2,000 to 10,000 with a 30% increase in minority participation. In 1997, she led the first Youth Summit that expanded National 4-H Conference to promote youth and adults working together to devise solutions with emphasis on diversity and inclusion. As Deputy for 4-H, she worked with Congress, public and private sectors to increase funding for 4-H by more than \$25 million over five years. Her leadership to the National 4-H Strategic Plan greatly increased 4-H membership due to diversity efforts and new marketing strategies. Her efforts for the 100th Anniversary of 4-H in 2002 provided an effective forum for youth voices in action.

#### **Quote:**

Throughout my career I had a keen interest in 4-H and I channeled my endeavors toward making a difference in the lives of youth and families. My mission in life is to approach everyone with love, dignity and respect, making that which I touch better than I found it.

It does not matter what degrees, honors or accomplishments I achieve, all that matters is that I made a positive difference in the lives of youth and families thus, changing hearts and minds to reach their full potential. I have been truly blessed by all the magnificent individuals that touched my life.



Dr. Hobbs speaking at Preparing Youth for Employable Futures.



Dr. Hobbs receiving The Secretary's Honor Award while serving as Deputy for the 4-H Youth Development Program.



Dr. Hobbs with 4-H delegation preparing to meet President Bush during 2002 National 4-H Conference.