

National 4-H Hall of Fame 2015

Ohio



Clarence J. Cunningham
Associate Extension Director and Professor Emeritus,
The Ohio State University

Home: Fredericksburg, OH

Nominated by: Ohio 4-H

Major 4-H Accomplishments:

Served as county extension 4-H educator, state 4-H specialist, professor, and Extension administrator. In retirement served on the committee that raised \$16.5 million to build the Nationwide and Ohio Farm Bureau 4-H Center on The Ohio State University campus that opened in 2008.

Honors: Ohio 4-H Hall of Fame; Ohio Agricultural Hall of Fame; Distinguished Alumni, College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences; and former state and national president of Epsilon Sigma Phi.

Biography:

Dr. Clarence J. Cunningham began 4-H at age 10 where his public speaking and leadership skills were learned in the local club and county 4-H organizations. From the sale of his grand champion steer at the 100th year of the Wayne County Fair he earned enough money to pay for his first year in college. He says the lessons he learned then resulted in the initiation of the Cunningham 4-H Leadership Development Endowment Fund in the mid-1990s. Today it awards grants annually to the Ohio 4-H Leadership Achievement winner and to two Collegiate Leadership scholarship winners who are former 4-H members continuing their college educations.

As an Extension educator at The Ohio State University, Cunningham taught courses and led or contributed to various programs. He was instrumental in starting the first 4-H horse show at the 1961 Ohio State Fair. He improved Ohio 4-H Conservation Camp by incorporating on-farm conservation experiences for campers. He retired as associate director, Ohio Cooperative Extension Service, where he was responsible for all personnel and budget issues. He taught and mentored hundreds of college students who are now leaders in Extension. He has taught program development graduate courses at several universities as well as a two-week 4-H course to Peace Corps volunteers going to Nigeria.

Quote:

Professor Cunningham is being honored for his ability and determination to influence others to reach their full potential. Both as an administrator and educator, he guided and encouraged extension professionals to create successful youth programs throughout the country and world. His colleagues admired and respected his leadership skills as he served as president and chair of many national organizations and committees across the extension spectrum. Dr. Cunningham's dedication and commitment to 4-H and his community never stops as he continues to make our world a better place to live. His students and colleagues cherish his lifelong friendship.

- Dr. Joel R. Soobitsky, Retired National 4-H Program Leader, USDA



Grand Champion Steer - September 1949, Wayne County Fair



Standing with State 4-H Leader Tom Archer at the A. B. Graham 4-H History Marker in front of Nationwide & Ohio Farm Bureau 4-H Center.



String Tie Affair 1998 - First Annual Celebration of Youth fund raiser for Ohio 4-H Foundation, seated with his wife Jane.