

National 4-H Hall of Fame 2013 Oklahoma



Merl E. Miller

Leadership Specialist & State 4-H Program Leader

Home: Stillwater OK Nominated by: Oklahoma 4-H

Major 4-H Accomplishments:

Received BS, MS and EdD degrees from Oklahoma State University in 1958, 1971 and 1981 respectively. Became an Oklahoma 4-H Agent in 1966, and State 4-H Specialist in 1970. Moved to Maryland in 1983 as Assistant Director/State 4-H Program Leader; also served as leadership specialist and Chair of the Agriculture and Extension Education Department before retirement in 1996.

Honors: Distinguished Service Awards, OAE4-HA and NAE4-HA. Visionary Leadership Award, Epsilon Sigma Phi. Honorary State Agriculturist Degree, Maryland FFA. Partners in 4-H Award, Maryland 4-H. Kiwanis Award for Outstanding Work with Youth. Jaycees Distinguished Service Award.

Biography:

The hallmark of Dr. Miller's career was building the capacity of the 4-H Program through high quality volunteer and staff curriculum and training to enable volunteers and agents to be successful. Dr. Miller made over 40 national and regional presentations on topics related to volunteerism, leadership and citizenship. As the Southern Region Leadership Curriculum committee chair, he led the effort to create the first comprehensive leadership development curriculum that incorporated the matching of life skills with learning experiences. He chaired, co-chaired or served an important role on over 35 national or regional planning groups, primarily to enhance the capacity of Extension to develop effective leaders.

Dr. Miller co-directed two national conferences for the Leadership Life Skills curriculum. He chaired the National Panel on Leadership Development, was on the Volunteers for the Future design team and workshop leader for the National Sharing Conference. He and Don Stormer, USDA Deputy Administrator for 4-H, created two NAE4-HA pre-conference invitational programs. Miller helped to create the 4-H Executive Development Institute and served as chair for Session III on Policy, Politics and Extension. He was active in state and national professional organizations including NAE4-HA, served as national Epsilon Sigma Phi professionalism chair and was a charter member of the Association of Leadership Educators.

Quote:

I was very fortunate as a 4-H member and professional to have guidance from very capable people. Volunteers and 4-H Educators are unique people driven by a strong desire to help others achieve. It's important that we support their work in every way possible ... with training and coaching, with challenging programs and supporting educational materials. During my career I tried to carry out my responsibilities and to help others do the same. Now in retirement I find there are opportunities as a volunteer and through financial support. We should pass it on.



Miller at his desk at OSU in the late 1970s.



Presenting a workshop at the University of Maryland, College Park, 1986



Pulling the Payne Co. 4-H float, "Grand Marshal's Cup" winner, on one of his restored tractors in the 2005 OSU Homecoming parade.