

National 4-H Hall of Fame 2013

Tennessee



George S. Foster
Professor and State 4-H Leader Emeritus

Home: McMoresville, TN Nominated by: Tennessee 4-H

Major 4-H Accomplishments:

County Extension agent in Washington Co. (1945-47), Tennessee Assistant 4-H Specialist (1948-51), Associate National Leader for Southeastern States, Federal Extension Service, USDA (1951-56), and Tennessee 4-H Club Professor and State 4-H Leader (1956-1981). During his tenure, Tennessee achieved the nation's largest youth enrollment in 4-H clubs.

Honors: NAE4-HA Distinguished Service and 25-year Service Awards, president of Phi Delta Kappa (UT Chapter), active member of Alpha Zeta, Epsilon Sigma Phi and Gamma Sigma Delta. Awarded "Life Membership" by the Parent-Teacher Association of America.

Biography:

Dr. George Foster served as an Extension Agent in Washington Co. (1945-47), state Assistant 4-H Specialist (1948-51), USDA Associate National Leader for Southeastern States (1951-56), and Tennessee 4-H Club Professor and State 4-H Leader (1956-1981). Under his leadership, TN 4-H club youth enrollments became highest in the nation, a comprehensive grade-level 4-H curriculum was developed and the Tennessee Assn. of 4-H Workers was organized. Foster received a national 4-H fellowship in 1947, during which he completed a dissertation, "An Evaluation of Supervision of Volunteer Leaders in Tennessee 4-H Club Work." At USDA, he chaired the national awards winners selection committee.

Foster initiated a number of firsts: at USDA he co-chaired the first program with the American Camping Association for Extension workers in camping, in Tennessee he supported the first state 4-H alumni organization and funds were secured to employ the first full-time Tennessee 4-H Foundation worker. He created the "Leadership in Depth" leader training program, one of the first in-depth 4-H leader training programs resulting in thousands of 4-H volunteer leaders being recruited and trained. Foster taught at several regional Extension summer courses and the American Farm Bureau Rural Youth School. When he retired, Foster had the longest tenure of any active state 4-H program leader.

Quote:

Dr. Foster often concluded his presentations by reciting this poem by R.L. Sharpe:

Isn't it strange, that princes and kings,
and clowns that caper in sawdust rings,
and common-folk like you and me,
are builders for eternity?

To each is given a bag of tools,
a shapeless mass and a Book of Rules;
and each must make 'ere time has flown,
a stumbling block or a stepping stone.