

National 4-H Hall of Fame 2015

Tennessee



M. Lloyd Downen

Dean and Professor Emeritus, University of Tennessee Extension

Hometown: Vincennes, IN

Nominated by: Tennessee 4-H

Major 4-H Accomplishments:

Served as Dean and Director, Tennessee Agricultural Extension service, 1977-1989. Advisory boards and councils including the National Extension Committee on Operation and Policy (ECOP), ECOP 4-H subcommittee, ECOP marketing subcommittee and the ECOP marketing and related industries subcommittee, 4-H Council Panel of Extension Directors. Selected by his peers to chair the Southern Directors Association. Served on National 4-H Council Board of Trustees. Under his leadership, Tennessee had more national 4-H project winners than any other state for 10 consecutive years.

Biography:

Dr. M. Lloyd Downen joined the University of Tennessee staff in 1947 as an agricultural economist. He served as leader of the agricultural economics section and as assistant dean before becoming Dean and Director of the Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service from 1977 until his retirement in 1989. During his administration, Dr. Downen led the Tennessee 4-H program to an unprecedented growth. He hired Ben Powell as state 4-H leader; provided resources for a grade-level curriculum in all 4-H projects; supported the employment of the first director of the Tennessee 4-H Foundation; and encouraged the involvement of support organizations including the Tennessee 4-H Alumni, Inc.

Under Dr. Downen's leadership, Tennessee had more national 4-H project winners than any other state for 10 consecutive years; participated in all national events; and developed a strong professional agents association. He was a strong supporter of the publication of a Tennessee 4-H history book and a Tennessee 4-H cookbook that became successful fund raising efforts and visibility tools. His leadership also resulted in Tennessee's involvement in international programs through the LABO international exchange program. He was the driving influence of the fund raising efforts for the Tennessee dining room at the National 4-H Conference Center.

Quote:

In retrospect, I did not know my 4-H pig project in 1933, at age 11, would be far more important to me in the future than learning to care for my pig. Other 4-H Club members and I were learning responsibility, integrity, leadership, citizenship and other life skills through 4-H projects and activities. Those experiences as a 4-H member were invaluable to me as I served as Dean of the University of Tennessee Extension.