

## National 4-H Hall of Fame 2006 National 4-H Council



### **Eligio 'Kika' de la Garza U.S. Congressman**

Home: McAllen, TX

Nominated by: Nat. 4-H Council & CSREES

#### **Major Efforts:**

Enlisted in the Navy and served in Korea. Elected to the Texas House of Representatives in 1952 and to the U.S. Congress representing Texas' 15th district in 1964. Served as chair of the Committee on Agriculture, leading measures to reform agriculture programs. Advocated for land grant universities, 4-H and extension, including innovative programs like CYFAR and EFNEP.

#### **Biography:**

Eligio "Kika" de la Garza has an illustrious career of public service. He enlisted in the Navy and served in Korea. In 1952 he earned a law degree and was elected to the Texas House of Representatives. He was elected in 1964 to the U.S. Congress representing Texas' 15th district. He was a founding member of the Hispanic Caucus in 1976, which he chaired from 1989-91. Rep. de la Garza proudly supported 4-H as chair of the Committee on Agriculture, and he led the way for the House to pass three farm bills and measures to assist agriculture, rural economic development, and human nutrition. He advocated funding to land grant university extension services for community-based programs and at-risk families.

Support from de la Garza for Children, Youth & Families at Risk (CYFAR) and the Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) led to significant innovation and cultural awareness in 4-H and extension. At an EFNEP presentation in 1973, de la Garza met young John Franz and was so impressed that he vowed to have John serve in his office when he was old enough. John later became his legislative aid, and is today a successful lawyer and mayor of Hidalgo, TX. Kika de la Garza has portrayed citizenship, leadership and character and support for 4-H and Cooperative Extension during his career of public service.



## **Ralph E. Kirch** **Michigan 4-H & National 4-H Foundation**

Hometown: Kalamazoo Co., MI

Nominated by: National 4-H Council

### **Major 4-H Efforts:**

An outstanding Michigan 4-H member who joined Michigan Extension as a 4-H agent in 1950. Served in every office of the Michigan 4-H Agents Association, including president in 1959. Honored as a National 4-H Fellow in 1959. Held NAE4-HA national offices and was elected president in 1960. Joined the National 4-H Foundation staff in 1961 - chaired the National 4-H Report to the Nation. Developed corporate partnerships to raise more than \$30 million to complete expansion of the National 4-H Center. Led Michigan 4-H foundation for seven years, then served as an administrator of the Michigan Department of Agriculture.

### **Biography:**

Ralph Kirch was an outstanding Michigan 4-H member. He joined Michigan Extension as a 4-H agent in 1950 and was assigned to Kent Co. in 1953. He led the 4-H Panorama program in Kent Co. which dramatically increased membership. Ralph served in every office of the Michigan 4-H Agents Association, including president in 1959 - the year he was honored as a National 4-H Fellow. He similarly held NAE4-HA national offices and was elected president in 1960. He was a leader in state and national efforts to establish the 4-H youth development profession as a respected career path in Cooperative Extension.

Ralph joined the National 4-H Foundation staff in 1961. He served for eight years, five as chair, on the National 4-H Report to the Nation (1963-70), which included an annual presentation to the President. Ralph successfully developed partnerships with corporate leaders - including J.C. Penney, Firestone and McCormick - to raise more than \$30 million to complete a debt-free expansion of the National 4-H Center. Ralph returned to Michigan to lead their 4-H foundation for seven years. He ended his career as an administrator of the Michigan Department of Agriculture.

### **Quote:**

"The 4-H program made a major impact on my life. It started at the time I turned 10 years old, a Belgium mare and a foal my first project. With that and affiliated events and people my life became very meaningful. It gave my life direction and focus, what I wanted to do for a career - 4-H work, and the opportunity to meet my life partner, Betty Shannon. The rest is history."

### **Photos:**



Laying the cornerstone of Branch Co. 4-H Cabin includes 4-H Agent Kirch, Sen. Blair Moody and Gov. & Mrs. Mennen Williams.



The first 4-H Day in NY City as proclaimed by Mayor Lindsay at Gracie Mansion (1969).



4-H Report to the Nation Team (ca. 1968). Ralph served for 8 years, 5 as chair.