

National 4-H Hall of Fame 2008

CSREES



John Banning

Asst. Director, Extension 4-H Division, USDA

Born: Independence, IN

Nominated by: CSREES

Major 4-H Accomplishments:

Began extension work in Indiana in 1948. Joined federal extension service as Asst. Director, Extension 4-H Division in 1956. Emphasized staff development and training to improve programs. Liaison to National 4-H Foundation, National 4-H Service Committee and NAE4-HA. After retirement, served as Chair of the National 4-H History Committee, resulting in the book 4-H: An American Idea 1900-1980 by Thomas & Marilyn Wessel.

Honors: NAE4-HA Distinguished Service Award, 1976. First NAE4-HA recipient of the Air Force American Spirit Award (now Air Force Recruiting Salute Award) at 1983 NAE4-HA conference. It is presented to individuals who exemplify citizenship - first recipient was Bob Hope in 1981.

Biography:

John Banning began extension work in Indiana in 1948 and came to the USDA federal extension service as Asst. Director, Extension 4-H Division in 1956. His work on training 4-H staff in streamlining the design and implementation of programs resulted in greater 4-H enrollments. Banning was deeply involved in the effort in the 1970s to transition 4-H Agents to a role as managers of 4-H volunteers to reach more youth. 4-H leadership encouraged agents to establish a broader volunteer system, creating a steady increase of 4-H volunteers that reached 578,000 by 1978. Banning was liaison to the National 4-H Foundation and National 4-H Service Committee, which merged during his tenure to form National 4-H Council.

Banning was also ES-USDA liaison to the NAE4-HA board from 1956-80, when membership increased from 300 to 3000. John's service included citizenship education programs, 4-H international programs and developing relationships with other national youth organizations and government departments and agencies. He served on the Peace Corps advisory Committee, resulting in a program between Peace Corps and National 4-H Foundation from 1961-1971 that established 4-H clubs in El Salvador, Uruguay, Venezuela, Brazil, Sarawak and Malaysia. After retirement, John was chair of the National 4-H History Committee, resulting in the book 4-H: An American Idea 1900-1980 by Thomas & Marilyn Wessel.



John Banning and Mary Nell Greenwood, Cooperative Extension Administrator, with the Air Force American Spirit Award.