

Illinois



Hubert J. Wetzel
Illinois State 4-H Specialist

Hometown: near Alhambra, IL

Inducted: 2005

Major 4-H Activities: Illinois 4-H staff for 32 years. Major supporter of 4-H international and horticulture programs.

Significant Honors: AGR fraternity Brothers of the Century Award; charter member of Krannert Center for the Performing Arts Marquee Circle; 40-year member of University of Illinois College of Agriculture, Consumer, and Environmental Science Dean's club; partner in restoration of the original Audubon's The Birds of America folio for University of Illinois Library that won a Friends of Libraries U.S. A. award for best use of volunteers. Inducted into the National Aviation and Space Exploration Wall of Honor for outstanding leadership and bravery as a WWII Army Air Corps navigator, 2003.

For nearly 60 years, Hubert J. Wetzel has provided leadership and guidance to the learning, living, and sharing experiences of thousands of youth and families in the state, nation and world. A noted pioneer of 4-H international programs, he worked closely with USDA staff to help create the International 4-H Youth Exchange (IFYE) Program. Wetzel served on numerous national 4-H program committees where he impacted many national 4-H activities and events. He formed a partnership with the National Junior Horticulture Association allowing thousands of 4-H youth to expand their knowledge of horticulture and increase their communication skills through national 4-H horticulture judging and speaking contests.

"During the past sixty years, I have seen the 4-H motto, "To Make the Best Better" in action countless times, through the efforts of thousands of members, their families, leaders and even whole communities. My work with 4-H international programs was extremely rewarding, as we developed learning experiences for young men and women in host family homes in the U.S. and other countries throughout the world. The IFYE program now has spread the 4-H motto and vision worldwide. From the simple concept promoted by my neighbor and 4-H pioneer William B. Otwell, who challenged youth to grow and display the best ten ears of corn, the vital principles of human betterment will continue to regenerate and spread."



Hugh Wetzel with Orville Bently, former Asst. Secretary of Agriculture, USDA, Yuho Morokawa, Secretary of 4-H Clubs in Brazil, Audrey Chang, 4-H Extension Specialist in the Peoples Republic of China, and Jacob Mogatle, Director of 4-H Clubs in Botswana.



Mr. Wetzel presenting the National Junior Horticulture Demonstration Contest Championship plaque to a 4-H member from Illinois.



Photo montage of Illinois State Fair scenes. Wetzel served as Superintendent of 4-H and FFA annual exhibits for most of his 32 years on the Illinois 4-H staff.