

Kansas



J. Harold Johnson
State 4-H Leader (1945-1958)

4-H Efforts: Johnson was the first full-time 4-H Agent in Kansas. He served nine years as Assistant State 4-H Leader and 13 as State 4-H Leader. His career is linked with the start of the International 4-H Youth Exchange Program in 1948, the continued development of the Kansas 4-H Journal, the only 4-H magazine in the nation, support for Clovia Scholarship House, the establishment of the Kansas 4-H Foundation, and other significant 4-H efforts.

4-H Honors: In 1993, J. Harold Johnson was presented the Distinguished Alumnus Award from Kansas State University College of Agriculture by the KSU Ag Alumni Association.

Home: Norton County Kansas
Nominated by: Kansas State
University Research & Extension
and the Kansas Association of
Extension 4-H Agents
Year Inducted: 2002

“First, the very beginning of the idea was revealed through prayer, and secondly, the building was constructed exclusively for use in teaching good citizenship...I should like to suggest that we thank God for our many, many blessings, this beautiful structure, for Rock Springs and the splendid service it provides for this great Nation and the privilege we have in living in America. Yes, I would suggest that we rededicate ourselves to the purposes for which this building is being dedicated today in order that each succeeding generation will enjoy the freedom which we so often take for granted.”

- From the 1972 dedication of Heritage Hall at Rock Springs 4-H Center.

J. Harold Johnson graduated from Kansas State Agricultural College (Kansas State University) in 1927 with a degree in Animal Husbandry. He was assigned to Sedgwick Co. (Wichita) as the first full-time 4-H agent in Kansas, where his lifelong dedication to the principles and values of 4-H took root. He served as Assistant State 4-H Leader for nine years and then state leader in 1945 through 1958. Perhaps his greatest legacy was recruitment of outstanding Sedgwick Co. citizens to give leadership and support to 4-H youth development. The impact of his leadership is found in 4-H programs that emphasized music appreciation, parliamentary procedure, safety, health, various 4-H events and contests.

His career is linked with the start of the IFYE program in 1948, continued development of the Kansas 4-H Journal, the nation's only 4-H magazine, support for Clovia Scholarship House, and formation of the Kansas 4-H Foundation. His dream of a 4-H leadership center started to be a reality in 1945 with the purchase of land which is now Rock Springs 4-H Center. Johnson was a member of Farmhouse Fraternity, Epsilon Sigma Phi, Rotary International, and served as a trustee and first Executive Director of the Kansas 4-H Foundation. He held a Master's degree from George Washington University. He married LaVerne Phillips on June 15, 1930. He passed away at the age of 94 in Manhattan, KS.