

North Carolina

Leary Rhinehart Harrill
State 4-H Leader



Hometown: Raleigh, North Carolina
Nominated by: North Carolina 4-H
Year Inducted: 2002

4-H Efforts: Harrill led a national 4-H mission to Austria to plant the seeds of 4-H. Having expanded the 4-H program among diverse youth in all one hundred counties of the state, he urged his best club members to join the International Farm Youth Exchange Program. Committed to school-based 4-H Clubs in rural areas, he also saw what 4-H could provide to urban and rural children in community clubs with volunteer leaders. Harrill secured hundreds of business sponsors for club projects and activities. He escorted his boys and girls to national events in DC and Chicago and claimed numerous honors for himself and for them. He wrote two books, *Images of 4-H* and *Memories of 4-H*.

L. R. Harrill was a Cotton Club member in his native Cleveland Co. He earned a degree in agriculture at NC State College, Raleigh. Harrill became club leader in Buncombe Co., the state's first assistant county agent. He later returned to NC State for a Master's Degree in agronomy. His graduate work and reputation for 4-H club work led to his appointment as State 4-H Leader from 1926-1963. "Mr. 4-H" worked with agents and local leaders to expand 4-H outside of school. He championed regular newsprint, radio, and occasional TV coverage for 4-H. His annual State 4-H Club Weeks thrived, fostering competition, celebration, cultural enrichment, civic responsibility, and spiritual enlightenment.

Harrill preferred scholarship awards for most club programs remained rigorous, as did the 4-H camps he had developed in all regions of the state. In 1959 he established the NC 4-H Development Fund to perpetuate these investments in youth, for he believed in educating the whole child in the art of better living. He knew that most former 4-H'ers would sustain the work he, they, and their agents or leaders had done together in continuing lifelong to "Make the Best Better." This vision has been borne out in thousands of ways and especially through the 4-H Honor Club, the service organization Harrill organized in 1931, early in his tenure as North Carolina's "Mr. 4-H."

"To make the maximum of life's opportunities you must have an objective greater than your own personal desires. You must dedicate yourself to that objective, and have faith in a power greater than your own and work without fear until you reach your objective." · "You must have self-confidence - know your assets as well as your weaknesses - know what you want out of life, believe in and put your heart and soul in it, and have the courage to stand alone if necessary rather than drift with the crowd." · "Be that person with enthusiasm that will radiate to others and become contagious; believe in the thing you are doing; put your heart and soul into it to the extent that it is the most important thing in the world." · "You must have a sincere interest in others and in the things they are doing and give to every individual a place of worth and recognition. You must be sincere with yourself and with other people, learn to love and serve others, constantly study other people to find out what makes them a success."

-- Quotes from L. R. Harrill in *Images of 4-H*



Mr. Harrill and other early Extension leaders with a tribute that he wrote.



Sharing NC 4-H Hall of Fame with 4-H members of the 1950's.



Harrill developed and sustained 4-H camps in all regions of NC.