



Media Contact:

Crescent Gallagher
Communications Director
304-380-3922
cgallagher@wvda.us

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Agriculture and Forestry Hall of Fame to Welcome New Members at 2018 Banquet

Charleston, WV - The West Virginia Agriculture and Forestry Hall of Fame (WVAFHOF) Foundation has selected five outstanding individuals to be inducted in 2018. These individuals will be honored at the WVAFHOF annual banquet at Jackson's Mill Saturday, July 14. The reception will start at 5:00 p.m., followed by a dinner at 6:00 p.m.

"The Mountain State has a rich heritage rooted in agriculture," said Commissioner of Agriculture Kent Leonhardt. "Despite our size, West Virginia citizens have made significant contributions to advancing agriculture. These individuals should be proud of the impact they have had on our state or nation."

Enshrinement in the WVAFHOF is reserved for those individuals, businesses, organizations, institutions and foundations that have made outstanding contributions to the establishment, development, advancement and improvement of the agricultural, forestry and family life of West Virginia.

This year's honorees are:

Barbara A. Breshock of Arnett is a 1979 graduate of WVU and is a respected forester and conservationist in the state, the Appalachian region and the nation. She was the first female professional forester hired by WV Division of Forestry in 1979. Through the WV Forest Stewardship program, she organized four workshops per year to provide forestry continuing education credits to Forest Stewardship Plan Writers and other registered professional foresters. She also initiated biological surveys on state forest systems in conjunction with WV Division of Natural Resources. She has served on the Society of American Foresters executive committee since 1998. Due to her involvement in partnership activities on state forest land, the WV Division of Forestry received the NWTf "Excellence in Agency Partnerships Award."

Russ Richardson of Arnoldsburg moved to Weston in 1989 to set up a consulting forestry business and real estate brokerage. In 2007, he was featured in an article about using the herbicide *Acclaim Extra* on invasive Japanese stiltgrass and worked with WVU faculty and

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graduate students on his property to test the effectiveness of this new herbicide. He testified in Charleston six times on issues related to forestry, managed timberland or ginseng. Much of his expertise on invasive species comes from his own investments in controlling these plants on his property.

Dr. Robert James Young (dec.) spent 20 years as a professor and plant pathology researcher at West Virginia University, which first became acquainted with him when it started collaborating with the USDA-ARS in Maine. During his time at WVU, Young became involved in the National Potato Breeding Program. He provided leadership to the program from 1963 to 1993. He served on many committees and held many leadership positions within the potato industry. He also served on the WVU Greenhouse Planning Committee and the Pesticide Safety Committee. He retired from WVU in 1993, but at 84 years old, he was still harvesting and evaluating potatoes, supporting soup kitchens and doing volunteer work.

Richard V. Snuffer II of Surveyor is a 1977 graduate of WVU and has dedicated his life to agriculture. He has held many prominent leadership roles within the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA), including as WV State Executive Director from 2014 to 2017. He has also been involved with many agricultural organizations throughout the state such as the WV Cattlemen's Association. Along with his involvement in agriculture, he served on the Raleigh Co. Board of Education for 14 years, serving as president for 10 years.

Harold Kenneth Skidmore of Centralia joined the U.S. Navy and served in the South Pacific from 1944 to 1946. After his service, he received a bachelor's degree in Animal Science from WVU and later his master's in agricultural education. His agricultural education career started at the Veteran's Farm Training program before he ended up at Braxton County High School. While there, he led many winning FFA teams at the state and national level. He also was a huge part of establishing a horticulture program. In 1985, he was recognized as one of the nation's outstanding teachers and presented with the Honorary American FFA Degree. He served on the Elk Conservation District where he held a leadership role and received numerous awards. He also has been involved in 4-H, organizing contests in Braxton County.

The WVAFHOF Banquet is open to the public. Tickets are \$35 each and the deadline for reservations is July 6. Tickets can be purchased from:

- Aaron Thacker, W.Va. Forestry Association, 304-372-1955
- Tina Payne, W.Va. Division of Forestry, 304-558-2788, ext. 51762
- Denise Hunnell, WVU Davis College of Agriculture, Forestry and Consumer Sciences, 304-293-2395
- Robin Gothard, WVDA, 304-558-3200, ext. 1320
- Robin Rupenthal, WVU Extension, 304-293-5693

For complete bios and more information, visit

www.agriculture.wv.gov/divisions/executive/WVAFHOF/Pages/default.aspx

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture protects plant, animal and human health through a variety of scientific, regulatory and consumer protection programs. The Commissioner of Agriculture is one of six statewide elected officials who sits on the Board of Public Works.