

News Release

6-30-14

AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY HALL OF FAME TO WELCOME 2014 MEMBERS AT ANNUAL BANQUET

The West Virginia Agriculture and Forestry Hall of Fame (WVAFHF) Foundation has selected five outstanding individuals for induction in 2014. These individuals will be honored at the WVAFHF annual banquet at Jackson's Mill, Saturday, July 19, 2014. A reception will begin at 5 p.m., followed by dinner at the Jackson's Mill dining hall at 6 p.m. Inductees for 2014 are: Robert Barnitz, Richard McClung, Mark Alan Metz, Roscoe Plumley and Jack Sturgill. The WVAFHF Banquet is open to the public. Tickets are \$30 each and the deadline for reservations is July 10. Tickets can be purchased from:

- **Hope Goff**, WV Forestry Association, 304-372-1955
- **June Mandel**, WV Division of Forestry, 304-558-2788, ext. 51762
- **LeVera Gillum**, WV Farm Bureau, 304-472-2080, ext. 302
- **Denise Hunnell**, WVU Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Design, 304-293-2395
- **Robin Gothard**, WVDA, 304-558-3550.
- **Erin Gregory**, WVU Cooperative Extension Service, 304-293-5694

Enshrinement in the WVAFHF 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. The WVAFHF Foundation was chartered in 1974. In 1976, the Board of Governors voted to include forestry professionals in the Hall of Fame.

Brief bios of the new members (Full bios will be available at www.wvagriculture.org/WVAFHF/index.htm):

- **Robert (Bob) Barnitz** grew up in Meigs County, Ohio, and has been involved in family-oriented agriculture since his childhood. His father was a produce dealer. In 1970, Bob and wife Corena went into business in Mason with two backyard greenhouses and a roadside produce stand. By the 1980s, Bob's Market and Greenhouses had acquired a fleet of trucks and began shipping to companies along the East Coast. In the 1990s, Bob's formed an exclusive partnership with Ball Seed Company to produce plug seedlings. In 1998, Bob's produced 7 million plugs for Ball Seed. In 2013, the company produced 88 million. The company expanded in the 1990s, opening new retail locations throughout the region. In 2005, Bob's opened market in Atlanta. The company also became a rooting station for Dommen USA. From his humble truck farm beginnings, Bob's has grown to encompass 20 acres of greenhouses and five retail locations with \$14 million in annual gross sales and 130 full-time employees. Bob's is the largest greenhouse operation east of the Mississippi River. With the help of his wife and five sons, Bob's Market and Greenhouses has become one of the leaders in the United States nursery industry.

Richard McClung is a native West Virginian from Greenbrier County. He graduated from West Virginia University with a BS in Animal Science in 1964. After his graduation, McClung became an American Angus Association Lifetime Member in 1964, and he worked as the Greenbrier Stock Farm Manager from 1964 to 1969. In 1978, he became a Managing Partner of Wehrmann Angus in New Market, Virginia and remained in that position until 2012. Mr. McClung worked with scholars at Virginia Tech and the American Angus Association researching beef cattle reproduction. The research he helped with eventually led to improved heat synchronization methods and the establishment of the milk Estimated Progeny Difference, a tool that helps producers make more informed decisions concerning the amount of milk that calves need. Mr. McClung has also actively encouraged and provided service toward the education of youth in the community. He has hosted county 4-H and FFA livestock judging teams, co-funded the West Virginia Junior Angus Association for the Eastern Regional Jr. Angus Association Show, and provided college students with six month internship opportunities in the cattle industry. Mr. McClung has donated heifers to be sold to benefit of the education of youth and independent research in the cattle industry through the Angus Foundation. The amount of these sales totaled \$100,000 in donations.

Mark Alan Metz was born in Huntington in 1959 and grew up in Barboursville. He attended Marshall University for two years, and then transferred to the West Virginia University School of Forestry, where he earned his Master's Degree in Forestry. He was active in the WVU Forestry Club and Xi Sigma Pi National Forestry Honorary. He worked at the West Virginia Division of Forestry from 1985-1990, where much of his time was spent fighting forest fires. He

also helped landowners evaluate and improve woodlands and was a strong proponent of detailed written forest management plans. He then founded Mountaineer Forestry Services, which he operated until 2012, when he took a state/federal forester job to help private landowners with non-commercial timber management. He was a founding member of the Woodland Owners of West Virginia. He was a board member for 10 years and president from 2004-2006. The logo he developed for the group is still in use. The "Emergency Forest Restoration Program" practice plan he developed in case of tornado or other disaster is still in use today. He married Becky Patterson in 1991 and they had two daughters. Mr. Metz died in a hunting accident in 2012 at age 53.

- **Roscoe Kessler Plumley** was born in Pear, West Virginia in 1924. He served in the U.S. military from 1944 until he was honorably discharged in 1946. He involved himself with agriculture for over 80 years. In 1956, he graduated from West Virginia University (WVU) with a Bachelor of Science degree. He then worked as a Vocational Agriculture teacher in Raleigh County from 1956 to 1960. There, he helped establish a new Vo-Ag department. Mr. Plumley was instrumental in establishing and equipping a new shop, classroom and school farm. He also served as the WVU 4-H and Extension Agent in Wyoming County for 13 years. Mr. Plumley's organizational efforts resulted in a tripling of the size, number, and participation of 4-H clubs and members in the county. In 1965 he received his Masters in Poultry Production and Science at WVU. After receiving his Masters, Plumley was given permission to assist with poultry in the nine-county Beckley area. There, he started the poultry cooperative in several counties, was responsible for the construction and operation of a cooperative feed mill at Saulsville and helped poultry producers in the area increase efficiency in feed receiving and distribution. Mr. Plumley was married to Ruby Smith Plumley, a retired schoolteacher, and together they had four children. Education was one of the most important things to Mr. Plumley, and he lived by the philosophy that "the basis of all education is reading, writing, and arithmetic. The three R's must be our major emphasis."

Jack Sturgill was born in Norton, Virginia, where he attended school until his enlistment in the U.S. Navy. He served during the Korean War until his honorable discharge in 1955. After his service, he enrolled in the Forestry program at North Carolina State University, where he earned membership in Phi Kappa Phi honorary and was elected president of both the Xi Sigma Pi honorary and the North Carolina State Forestry Club. While at NC State he joined the Society of American Foresters. He married Virginia Roberta Greene in 1958 and four years later settled in Petersburg working for the Westvaco Corporation at the Luke, Maryland, paper manufacturing facility. Mr. Sturgill encouraged and promoted safer harvesting practices, sustainable timber growth activities, and road construction that would meet landowner needs and future forest management goals. To that end, he established a Christmas tree operation near Durbin in Pocahontas County where he showcased the practices he actively encouraged. In 1994 he worked as an international consultant to Serbia, evaluating the possibility of acquiring lumber and establishing a sawmill in central Serbia as part of a joint venture involving West Virginia and Russian firms. He is a charter member and past president of the WV Forestry Association. He was also appointed by the governor to serve on the Board of Directors of the West Virginia Board of Registration for Foresters.