

Jacob Moffett McNeel, Jr.

Jacob Moffett McNeel, Jr., known by his friends and family as “Moffett” or “Mac,” was born May 22, 1928 in Pocahontas County. As a youth, Mr. McNeel was active in 4-H and excelled in livestock showing and sheep shearing, winning the state 4-H meat animal competition in 1946 and the state sheep shearing contest in 1949.

Following graduation from high school, he began farming full-time on the 880-acre family farm in Hillsboro. Mr. McNeel became one of the major beef, swine, and sheep producers in Pocahontas County despite a tragic farming accident in the fall of 1961 where he lost his right hand in a corn picker.

He has had a tremendous impact on youth agriculture within the county and throughout the state. Over a 21-year span, he hosted more than 2,000 youngsters on tours of his farm. He went on to teach many of them even more about agriculture as several became members of the 4-H club he led for 40 years. He was elected to the county board of education for eight years and served three years as its President.

Mr. McNeel has been a member of the Pocahontas County 4-H Foundation for 66 years, serving 35 of those years as its President. In 1943, he helped negotiate with the CCC to obtain the camp presently located at Thornwood. During the last 10 years, he has overseen more than \$125,000 worth of improvements to the camp, which serves approximately 150 4-Hers each summer.

Mr. McNeel’s work on the 4-H Foundation has also had significant national impact. In 1963, the year of the West Virginia Centennial Celebration, Moffett was instrumental in bringing the National Youth Science Camp (NYSC) to Pocahontas County. Since then, more than 4,500 of the nation’s top high school science students have attended this camp.

Mr. McNeel and his late wife, Elma, were members of Farming for Better Living for the 20 years of its existence and won awards from that organization at the county, regional and state levels. He was selected as the state Soil and Conservation winner in 1987. The following year, at the state National Agriculture Day Celebration, Commissioner of Agriculture Gus Douglass presented him with the Bringing Honor and Recognition to the State of West Virginia award. Mr. McNeel received the West Virginia Farm Bureau Distinguished Service Award in 1996 and was the Agriculture Achievement Awards Heritage winner at the 1999 State Fair. He also served more than 20 years as Vice Chairman of the Pocahontas County Historic Landmarks Commission.

He has been an active member of the West Virginia Farm Bureau (WVFB) for 66 years and served as President of the Pocahontas County Chapter for five years, Secretary-Treasurer for 35 years, and as a member of the WVFB State Board of Directors for eight years. He was instrumental in transforming WVFB from a fraternal into a services rendered organization.

Mr. McNeel served on the Board of Directors of the Lewisburg and Roanoke Farm Credit Association for 35 years, five of those years as Chairman, and 10 as Toastmaster for their annual meetings. He continues his 25-year tenure as Director for the Farmers Home Fire Insurance Company and his 40-plus years as Director of the McNeel Cemetery Association.

