

# Elwood Williams

Elwood Williams was born and raised in Moorefield. He was only 12 when his father died, and he used his bicycle to deliver milk from the family's three cows to support the family. He also worked for local chicken farmers throughout the year to help the family make ends meet.

He graduated from Moorefield High School in 1952, attended Potomac State College in 1952-1953, and then entered Virginia Polytechnic Institute (VPI) in the fall of 1953 under the first four-year Rockingham Poultry Marketing Cooperative Scholarship. He graduated with honors with a B.S. Degree in Poultry Science in 1956, followed by an M.S. Degree in Agriculture Economics in 1957.

He worked for Rockingham Poultry Marketing Cooperative and later Pierce Foods/Hester Industries. It was at Pierce that Mr. Williams helped to develop "Wing Dings," which led to wings becoming the most popular appetizer in the nation, and provided a springboard for several other further-processed products. Working with manufacturers, he designed new cookers, batters and breaders for the plant. These designs are now used throughout the industry. Mr. Williams became vice president for new product development and traveled the world to open new markets for poultry and other further processed meat products.

When he started at the company in 1959, it had two products, 15 employees and gross receipts of \$225,000 per year. When the company was sold to ConAgra, it was a \$100 million per year company with 750 employees.

Mr. Williams and his late wife, Joyce Kessel Williams, operated K & W Equipment, a John Deere franchise and Misty Mountain Farms, where the family still raises breeder hens, Suffolk sheep, commercial and purebred Black Angus cattle and club calves. The farm was recently filmed by the Chesapeake Bay Commission as an example of best management environmental practices.

Mr. Williams and his second wife, Yvonne, are active board members of the Hardy County Tour and Crafts Association and plan the Antique Tractor and Car Show. They worked diligently in support of a bond issue to build a new Moorefield High School and to renovate East Hardy High School.

He has been a leader in numerous civic and professional groups, including South Branch Railroad Board Chairman, U.S. Poultry and Egg Association Board of Directors member, West Virginia Poultry Association President, and 50-plus years as a member of the Moorefield Lions Club.

He was instrumental in preserving the CSX rail line through Moorefield, the construction of Moorefield Town Park, and was a founding member of the first Hardy County Rural Development Authority.

The Moorefield High School FFA made him an honorary member and the West Virginia Poultry Association honored him as a Lifetime Member in 2006. Most recently, the Hardy County Chamber of Commerce named him Community Service Person of the Year in 2011.

