

# Gilbert E. (Gene) Bailey



Gilbert Eugene "Gene" Bailey has been active in many community projects in and around Mercer County, including service as a member of the Mercer County School Board and the County Extension Service Board. Bailey was twice elected to serve as chair of the Mercer County Education Association, serving on that group's executive board for several years. Colleagues in the field of education also selected Bailey to serve as chair of the West Virginia Education Association's Resolution Committee and Delegate Assembly.

His interest in agriculture began in 1948 with his work at the Holly Hill Nursery. He has owned and operated the Bluestone Nursery and Christmas Tree Farm since 1964. His teaching experience centered around 20 years with the Mercer County School system, teaching ornamental horticulture and social studies. But, it is Bailey's work with Christmas trees for which he is best known. He has served on the board of directors of the National Christmas Tree Association, including a term as vice-president in 1969. He has edited a newsletter for the West Virginia Christmas Tree Industry from 1963 to the present, providing free advice to fellow growers through the newsletter and personal interaction.

Bailey served Mercer County and West Virginia as a member of the House of Delegates in the 1980s and 1990s, chairing the Higher Education Subcommittee, serving on the Finance Committee, College Budget Subcommittee, and serving as vice chairman for the Agriculture Committee. He has also devoted time to the Princeton City Council, serving twice as mayor and representing Princeton to the Mercer County Board of Health.