

WEST VIRGINIA

2021



AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY HALL OF FAME

BARRY LESTER COOK

Barry Lester Cook was born in 1949 in Williamson, where he graduated from high school in 1967. He earned a B.S. in Forest Management from WVU in 1971 and an M.B.A. from Duke in 1994.

He began his career as Logging Superintendent for Weyerhaeuser Company in Plymouth, N.C., and then worked at J.P. Hamer Company. In 1978, he became procurement officer at Coastal Lumber, eventually becoming Vice President of Operations. He then became President of Forest Products Group and eventually purchased Indiana Hardwoods.

He was appointed State Forester in 2017. As head of the state Division of Forestry, he orchestrated numerous initiatives to attract students to forestry programs and traveled to many national meetings and conferences to tout West Virginia's forest resources. He pushed for legislation to recognize the Division's foresters as emergency responders and provide them with appropriate benefits. He also organized a Division of Forestry Color Guard and Chaplain Program, among many other initiatives.

He was known as an energetic, resilient and innovative leader who took great pride in promoting the state's forest industries and who worked cooperatively with his employees, colleagues and other state government agencies.

He was chosen as the West Virginia Forestry Association Forester of the Year in both 2018 and 2020. He was a member of the Woodrow Wilson High School Athletic Boosters, the United Methodist Temple in Beckley and Antioch Baptist Church in Enfield, N.C.

