



**THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

### **Hardin County Extension News Release**

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## **Ag Hall of Fame to Induct New Members**

*Hardin County* – The Hardin County Agriculture Hall of Fame has announced the 2022 honorees to be inducted at the nineteenth annual Agriculture Hall of Fame recognition banquet. The 2022 inductees include: Gerald E. Althausser, J. Roger Crates, William Griffith, Dr. William Martin Miller, and Thomas E. Wilcox, Sr. The banquet will be held on Tuesday, December 6th, beginning at 6:30 pm at St. John's Evangelical Church on East Carrol Street in Kenton. The public is invited to honor these inductees and their families, and to recognize their many accomplishments. The purpose of the county Agriculture Hall of Fame is to recognize outstanding agricultural contributions by Hardin County people and to honor those who have brought distinction to themselves and the agricultural industry.

Stephanie Jolliff will be the guest speaker. Stephanie is a 2016 inductee of the Hardin County Agriculture Hall of Fame and is the agricultural education instructor and FFA advisor at Ridgemont High School, where she is a leader in the state and nation in agricultural education. She has been presented the Franklin D. Walter Educator Award in 2010, 2011, and 2013. Her FFA members have been led to win numerous state and national proficiency awards, degrees, and career development events. She has served as the advisor to multiple Ohio and National FFA Model of Innovation Chapter Awards. Under her leadership, the Ridgemont FFA has been named a Top 10 Chapter in Ohio for several years in a row.

Gerald E. Althausser graduated from Kenton High School and later The Ohio State University with a B.S. Degree in Dairy Science. He operated the family farm with his late wife Nancy since 1965. For the first 20 years, they raised corn, soybeans, wheat, and hay along with beef cattle, sheep, and a farrow-to-finish swine operation. He served as a salesclerk for Middendorf Stockyards. He worked for the Farm Service Agency and was named CED in Union County in 1987. In 1984, he assisted his sons as they began a beekeeping enterprise for 4-H and FFA projects, which he later expanded to 100 hives marketing wholesale honey, and then expanded this business into making beeswax candles. He added pumpkins, gourds, ornamental corn, and a small orchard. Althausser Honey Farm and Pumpkin Patch became the site of "Sweet Harvest," which has educated thousands of children and adults for over 25 years about

beekeeping, small scale pumpkin and apple production, and the benefits of local honey. Over the years, he has also been active in the Kenton Farmers Market.

Althausser has served Goshen Township as a community fund drive volunteer and past member of the zoning committee. He served as the Master, Overseer, Steward, and numerous other offices in the Goshen Grange. In addition, he has served the Hardin County Pomona Grange as an officer and County Deputy. He is a seventh degree National Grange member. A member of the Forest First United Methodist Church, he was involved in Hardin County 4-H both as a member and served as the advisor for the Veterinary Science Club for 22 years. While a member of the Kenton FFA, he served as an officer and received the State FFA Degree. He is a member of the Hardin County OSU Alumni Club, OSU Alumni Association Life Member and OSU President's Club. Along with his late wife Nancy, they established the Kyle Eric Althausser Memorial Scholarship Fund. Althausser has been an Ohio State Fair Heritage Crafts exhibitor and member of the Hardin County Agricultural Society. He could also be found demonstrating beekeeping at the Hardin SWCD Forestry Field Day.

J. Roger Crates graduated from Kenton High School in 1967. He operated a farrow-to-finish hog operation for 40 years, has raised corn, soybeans, and wheat for 55 years where he currently farms 920 acres. He has been in the excavating business for 50 years, currently with 6 full-time employees. He has been a 4-H advisor to youth with agricultural projects, a founding member of the Hardin County Pork Producers, where he was instrumental in the creation of the Pork Trailer at the county fair. He has participated in Ohio Pork Council trips to Washington D.C. to lobby with congressmen on issues facing farmers and the ag industry. For several years he has provided his expertise to the Hardin County Fair, donating time and equipment maintaining track areas and supporting the Junior Livestock Sale. He has served on the Buck Township Zoning Committee.

Crates is a member of the Wolf Creek United Methodist Church. He was a state youth representative to the Ohio Grange Convention. While in high school, he held several offices in the Kenton FFA and received both the State and American Farmer Degrees. He served proudly 6 years in a U.S. Army Reserve unit. He was a member of the Hardin County Young Farmers Organization. Later, he worked with the Hardin County court system to assist at-risk youth by providing them with part-time employment at the farm. He has served as both president and vice president of the Hardin County Pork Producers, served on the Hardin County 4-H Council, and was a Hardin County Health Board member for over 20 years where he held several offices. A member of the Wolf Creek Grange, at one time Crates was the youngest Grange Master in the state. He has been a Farm Bureau member for over 50 years and served as a Farm Bureau Council member.

William "Bill" Griffith graduated from Elm Valley High School in Delaware County and later The Ohio State University with a B.S. Degree in Agriculture and completed a major in accounting. He formed Griffco, Inc. to handle the farm operation and Powell Seeds as a partnership. When he joined Powell Seeds as a partner in 1978, it was the only existing seed company in Hardin County. As a farmer, Bill produces hybrid seed corn, seed wheat, oats, and soybeans. He also fed fat cattle for over 35 years. He is still active in all operations, hiring local company employees and Hardin County students to detassel

seed corn while fostering an interest in agriculture. A Farm Bureau member for 44 years, Bill served on the board of trustees as president and was a representative for county trips to Washington D.C. A past president of the Hardin County OSU Alumni Club, he established the Griffith Family Scholarship which is awarded to students who major in agriculture on main campus and the Lima campus.

Griffith has represented Powell Seeds at the Hardin County Fair where it is common to find him in the Powell Seeds booth. He is a member of the Ohio Seed Improvement Association and Ohio Foundation Seeds. As a certified public accountant and partner in a Columbus accounting firm, he served farm accounts. After college he worked for the Ohio Department of Agriculture Bureau of Markets. Service club memberships include the Hardin County Shrine Club and the Elks. He served on the Liberty National Bank Board of Directors for 25 years and the Ada School Board for 4 years. He was a 4-H advisor in Liberty Township and has been a member of Ada First United Methodist Church for 44 years. Griffith also served on the Ohio State University Extension state advisory committee, representing Extension programs in Hardin County.

Dr. William Martin “Marty” Miller graduated from Plymouth High School in 1969. He then attended The Ohio State University from 1969-1976, earning his B.S. Degree in Agriculture and Doctor of Veterinary Medicine. He is being inducted into the Hardin County Agriculture Hall of Fame posthumously after passing away in 2021. He built Diamond-M Veterinary Clinic, the first large animal hospital and surgery in Hardin County. He was a general veterinary practitioner serving Hardin County and surrounding counties treating sick or injured animals. He provided herd management care, tested animals for shows and sales. He served as a county fair and racehorse veterinarian and spoke to various organizations about veterinary medicine. Marty traveled to farms to test, treat, and vaccinate livestock. He counseled producers on herd management, including feed, housing, and treatments. During the swine flu outbreak, he did a lot of testing for this disease. He worked with 4-H clubs to prepare projects for the county fair.

Dr. Miller was an adjunct professor of large animal medicine and pharmacology for vet students at Brown Mackie College in Findlay. He owned Riverhill Management, LLC and was an independent contractor for Intravet to teach veterinary practice owners and staff in business management. He was a speaker at the American Association of Equine Practitioners on construction of large animal hospitals. He was a life member of the OSU Alumni Association, Farm Bureau, Hardin County Trotting Association, American Association of Swine Practitioners, American Association of Equine Practitioners, Ohio Veterinary Medical Association, and the American Veterinary Medical Association. He received the Hardin County Fair Lifetime Service Award and was selected for Well-Managed Practice by OVMA. He was an Elder of Trinity United Presbyterian Church, a member of Kenton Elks 157, and the Hardin County Revolving Loan Fund. Dr. Miller was Chairman of the Board and a board member of Community First Bank for 25 years and a member of the Independent Community Bankers Association.

Thomas E. “Bud” Wilcox, Sr. is being inducted to the Hardin County Agriculture Hall of Fame as a “Pioneer in Agriculture.” Born in 1916, he graduated from Kenton High School in 1934. He was a full-time farmer, beginning his farming career as a child with his father, Elgin Wilcox. Bud was one of the first

students to participate in the Future Farmers of America at Kenton High School, becoming the first chapter president of the Kenton FFA in 1934. He grain-farmed “on the halves” early in his career and after marrying his wife Anita, they were able to purchase land and rent ground as it became available. Bud ventured into dairy production in the early 1940s but then sold the dairy cows and started raising hogs while continuing to increase acreage and practices with the grain operation. Wilcox Farms continued to thrive under Bud’s leadership. Maine Anjou cattle were added to the farm after discovering them on a hunting trip in southern Ohio in the 1970s where they remained a staple for many years. Bud passed away at age 67 in 1984.

Wilcox was a consultant to county agriculture agents and other farmers in the area with tips and tricks of the trade. He was a member of Farm Bureau and president of the Hardin County Fair Board. He received the Soil and Water Conservation Stewardship Award, Outstanding Service Award to the Kenton FFA Chapter, and was Master of the McDonald Grange. He was a member of the Kenton Elks Lodge, served as Governor of Kenton Moose Lodge, and built the Wilcox Woods shelter house on the family property to be the annual location of the Moose Picnic. He was also instrumental in the construction of the new Moose Building in the early 1980s. Wilcox was a lifetime member of St. John’s United Church of Christ, serving as president of church council. In addition, he was a Lynn Township Trustee, and Republican Party County Chairman.

Tickets for the Hardin County Agriculture Hall of Fame Banquet must be purchased in advance through November 28. Tickets are \$15 and can be reserved by calling the Hardin County Extension office (419-674-2297) or purchased from the committee members: Genny Haun, Bob McBride, Ruth Oates, Kerry Oberlitner, Gary Harpster, Steve Poling, Zac McCullough, Bob Wood, and Mark Badertscher.