

Biographies



2017-2018

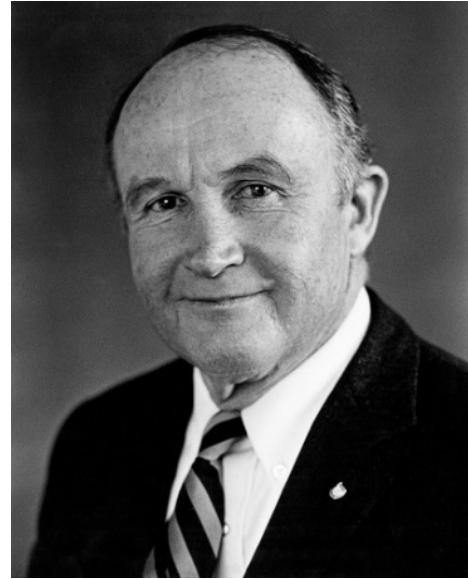
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2017

James A. Fish Sr.

James A. Fish Sr. has been recognized many times for his outstanding contributions and progressive leadership which have benefitted the dairy industry in Michigan and nationally, as well as for his efforts in tree farming, wildlife habitat, conservation, and as a successful manager of his dairy herd. Jim was born in Scranton, PA on Feb. 21, 1927, died on August 25, 2016 at age 89. He attended Scranton Country Day School and Choate in Connecticut. In 1950, Jim graduated from Penn State University with a BS in dairy science and a minor in forestry. He moved to Michigan to manage Lockshore Farms, in Hickory Corners, for R.F. Locke. Jim served in WWII and the Korean War. In 1957, Jim married Alice Belin and in 1963, they bought Lockshore Farms. They have three children, Tamalyn, James Jr. and Susan. Jim progressively improved the dairy facilities moving away from tiestalls to freestalls, when he saw that his cows produced better using this type of housing and feeding system. Being a supporter of AI, Jim was one of the first to use synchronization of estrus. He worked with MSU and Upjohn Animal Health on a number of research projects. Jim focused on producing quality alfalfa and raising good heifer replacements. Jim had one of the top Guernsey herds in the country and later moved to grade and registered Holsteins. He won multiple awards while exhibiting cattle at local, state, and national shows and was a well-respected judge, nationally and internationally.



Jim's passion for the dairy industry and dairy cattle is spelled out in his leadership for breed organizations, his milk marketing cooperative and milk promotion. He served on the Board of Directors for the American Guernsey Cattle Club, serving as Vice President, and was responsible for the breed implementing the use of USDA Cow Indexes for recognition of superior Guernsey females, making the Guernsey Breed the first to use genetic evaluations to recognize top cows in their breed. Jim was on boards for the Michigan Guernsey Breeders Assoc., the Michigan Purebred Dairy Cattle Assoc., Farm Credit Services, Barry County Farm Bureau, and Dairy Farmers of America. Jim served as treasurer for Independent Cooperative Milk Producers Association and the United Dairy Industry of Michigan, and served on the MSU Dairy Advisory Council, the Governor's Milk Marketing Committee, and the Governor's Advisory Council for the Michigan Dairy Industry. He was instrumental in supporting component pricing of protein for milk and milk products as chair of the Milk Component Pricing Committee. In 1987, Jim was named Michigan State University Dairy Farmer of the Year and in 1991 was inducted into the Michigan Farmer's Hall of Fame.

Jim also loved the woods where he hunted, fished and worked as a tree farmer. As an avid hunter and conservationist, Jim was a member of eight hunting and conservation groups including the Ruffed Grouse Society, Trout Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy, Michigan Forest Association and Michigan United Conservation Club. Jim served on the Board of Directors for the Four Township Water Resource Council and the Barry County Soil and Water Conservation District. Jim received the Dow Conservation Award, the Goodyear Conservation Award and District Conservationist of the year for Barry County. In 1986 he was recognized nationally as the Outstanding Chairman for Soil and Water Conservation Districts. In 2000, he was named Michigan Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year and in 2001, U.S. North Central Region Tree Farmer of the Year. Jim loved working with dairy cows and in the woods and learned to care for and manage both well.

Mike Fordyce

Mike Fordyce grew up in Bismarck, North Dakota, the son of Gordon & Arlys Fordyce. He attended college at Minnesota (Mankato) State University earning a degree in Education. Outside the classroom Mike played baseball for 4 years, competing in Division II College World Series, and played one year of hockey.

Mike began his dairy career in Wisconsin in 1980, working for the Ralston Purina Co. Mike and his wife Sandy transitioned into sales management in 1989, training in Lafayette, Indiana. Then in 1990, they moved to Michigan, to lead the Sales Team to support and grow the dairy business through a value added approach.

Mike led the Purina Dairy Team in Michigan for 24 years, before being asked to work nationally for the company. He and his team worked closely with many producers, positively impacting their business, their quality of life, and the Michigan dairy industry. Successfully the team navigated through rapidly changing dairy markets during challenging years for the dairy industry.

His passion for people and the dairy industry led him to engagement with Michigan State University's dairy program. He was invited to do many guest lectures for MSU dairy classes and interviewed and mentored students to help prepare them for career paths. In addition, he developed dairy internships for dairy students in Michigan, and supported the MSU Dairy Club exemplifying his commitment to young people and Michigan's dairy industry.

Mike and his team provided key support in growing the MSU Dairy Challenge program, and initiated Purina's support of the program both nationally and regionally. Finally, his leadership and engagement helped create a unique collaboration with MSU's College of Veterinary Medicine in the establishment of the Training Center for Dairy Professionals at Green Meadows Farms.

Always asking 'What Next', Mike found another avenue to make a difference by serving on the Michigan Dairy Memorial & Scholarship Foundation Board beginning in 2000. He contributed actively to the Board in various roles, including serving on the Scholarship Selection Committee for several 3-year terms, the 50th Anniversary Planning Committee, the Promotions Committee and from 2003 through 2006 as Vice-President and President of the Board.

The dairy industry of Michigan has held national prominence as Michigan's dairy producers continue to lead in key leadership roles. Mike's vision & drive meshed very well with the Michigan dairy industry's history of impact & leadership.



Richard and Patricia Hyde

Richard and Patricia Hyde have built a family and a registered Holstein herd in Morley, Michigan. Both Richard and Patricia grew up on dairy farms where they were both involved with 4-H and working on the family farm. The romance started at the Rustic Herd Dispersal Sale in 1973. From then a journey took place where both Richard and Patricia continued following their love for farming and cows. Together they had three kids, Shaun, Michelle and Katie and were together for 39 years until Richard's death in 2014.

Richard Hyde was born October 9th in Ionia, Michigan. He graduated from Morley Stanwood High School in 1964. After graduation he attended Michigan State University, earning a Bachelor's degree in Dairy Science. In 1969, he was drafted in the United States Marines Corp. and served in the artillery division during the Vietnam War. After returning from the war, Richard returned to the family farm and married Patricia in 1975. Richard was passionate about agriculture and was involved in many organizations including Michigan Farm Bureau, 4-H Leader for Winfield Hustlers, Michigan Maple Syrup Association, Michigan Milk Producers Association, and former President of the Michigan Holstein Association.



Patricia is the daughter of George and Jean Robb and graduated from Fowlerville High School in 1973. Patricia was a MMPA Dairy Communicator for 20 years and also served on the Montcalm County Farm Bureau board. She too was a 25 year 4-H leader in Montcalm County and for 30 years helped as a dairy diplomat organizing the Little Red Barn at the Montcalm County 4-H Fair. Patricia was the Winfield Township Clerk for 8 years and has worked for Morley Stanwood Schools for 20 years as a paraprofessional.

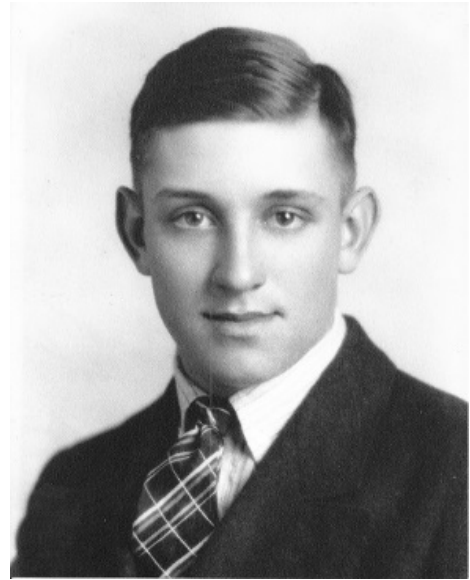
In 1980, Richard and Patricia were District 5 Outstanding Young Dairy Couple for MMPA. Over the years Richard and Pat enjoyed watching their children grow up in 4-H and showing cows. The family showed at Montcalm and Ionia Free Fair and at the state level shows. Richard and Patricia also enjoyed traveling to the National Holstein Conventions each year.

All three of the Hyde children attended Michigan State University and were recipients of the Michigan Dairy Memorial Scholarship. Each is currently involved in the Michigan agriculture industry. Richard influenced many during his 68 years in Michigan agriculture and he and Patricia provide a legacy of love for family and cows.

Howard W. Nash

Howard W. Nash was born in 1919 in Ionia County, Michigan, the oldest boy in a family of seven children. He grew up on the dairy farm of his father, and mother. He and his family were avid attenders at the Ionia Free Fair and when he was old enough to show dairy cattle he was anxious to show his latest dairy prize. The animal was auctioned at the 4-H auction to fund later educational pursuits.

His participation in Future Farmers of America in high school in Ionia, was instrumental in his decision to enter the farming profession. He and seven other members of a dairy judging team in 1936, not only won the state competition of FFA dairy judging, but they went on to Kansas City, Kansas and won the National competition as well that year. The FFA instructor, Mr. Woods became a lifelong friend of the eight as they matured. A partial scholarship came with the judging championship, and he attended the Michigan State University short course in the fall of 1936, concentrating on dairy farming.



Howard married Josephine Heator in April of 1945 and they together began farming on an eighty acre farm in Orange Township. He raised Holstein cattle, swine and chickens. He sold milk from his herd. He raised hay, beans, wheat, oats, corn, and sorghum at different times. He was actively involved in an Artificial Breeders cooperative in Ionia.

He was a frequent attendee to the Lake Odessa Livestock Auction so it only made sense to work there in later years. Howard was employed at Allis Chalmers parts warehouse in Lansing for several years in the late 60's and early 70's. He was a life member of the Levalley United Methodist Church in rural Ionia.

He and his wife Josephine had three children, Dwight, Sherry Jo, and Teresa, which he enjoyed watching grow on the farm. The family grew to include eight grandchildren, nineteen great grandchildren. He was always eager to hear of their adventures, but especially if it involved agriculture. He was active on the farm until 2009 when they as a couple sold the farm to grandchildren.

Howard lived a full life of 93 years, passing away in 2012. He always enjoyed a trip to the livestock shows at the fair, and livestock auctions, even after leaving the farm.

Joe and Melva Oesch

Joe was born in 1926 and raised on his family's first generation dairy farm. Joe was forced to grow up fast. He sacrificed his education for his family when both his brother and brother-in-law were drafted to serve in World War II. Joe wasn't able to return to school the summer after 8th grade because there was so much work between the 24 cow family dairy and also his brother-in-law's cropping operation. He sometimes worked all night long planting and harvesting crops for both farms.

Joe was finally able to have some free time after the war ended and found a local girl named Melva Crosby. They were married in 1950. Melva was a country girl but did not grow up on a farm. It didn't take long for her to fit in with her work ethic. She acclimated quickly and took on milking responsibilities.

Joe and Melva had six children of their own: Fred, Bonnie, Sam, Jeff, Sally, and Tom. They also opened their home to a couple foster children over the years. One of the children, Ken, fit right in and was adopted into the family in 1974. In 1981, Joe and Melva formed a partnership with their three sons (Fred, Tom, and Jeff) and named the farm SwissLane Dairy Farms.

Joe and Melva both were very active members of the Alto Apostolic Christian Church. They entertained overnight guests, hosted many events, participated on many committees, and taught Sunday School.

Melva's love for food, cooking, and nutrition led her to a couple of different jobs not related to the farm. She was a Shaklee distributor and worked as chef/waitress at the local restaurant owned by Joe's sister.

Their social time even revolved around the farm. They were members of the Star Farm Bureau, a networking group of local farmers mainly focused on dairy. Joe especially loved these monthly meetings where he would learn about the latest technology. This was his best attribute as a farmer. He loved learning about ways to improve, become more efficient, and innovate. This was evidenced as he pushed for the farm to be one of the earliest adapters of Harvestor silos, DHI testing, and artificial insemination. Another favorite project of his was carrying on the family tradition of making maple syrup.

Joe has been to every single dairy show at the Kent County fair since 1935. His enthusiasm for 4-H has become a family tradition that his great-grandchildren get to benefit from today.

Joe and Melva leave a legacy to the Oesch family and SwissLane Farms of family values, God-honoring conduct, and thinking light-years ahead. In 2011, 8 automatic milking units were installed to expand the herd by 500 bringing the milking herd to 2,000 cows. At the time, this was the biggest robotic dairy in the Midwest region. More than 33 members of the Oesch family live within two miles of the farm today. Joe and Melva have 24 grandchildren and 51 great-grandchildren (with more on the way!). Currently, there are 19 members of the family that work on the farm. It is still farm policy to do minimal labor and no cropping on Sunday to honor the Sabbath.



Carl Rasch

In recognition of 40 years of service from Carl Rasch to Michigan Milk Producers Association (MMPA) and the dairy industry, MMPA is making a contribution to the Michigan Dairy and Memorial Scholarship Foundation in Carl's name to recognize him as a Foundation Honoree.

Rasch was hired by MMPA as the director of milk sales in 1977 and while the nature of his job has changed, Rasch has remained a steadfast fixture for the last four decades of marketing milk to the greatest advantage possible.

Touted as MMPA's resident expert in the area of Federal Orders as well as the Super Pool, Rasch was credited with writing the book on milk marketing. Rasch's thorough knowledge of the business and straight forward approach cemented his position with keen milk marketing skills at MMPA.

Over his tenure, Rasch has seen the co-op evolve from a local customer base to an international scale. His connection with customers both within Michigan and outside the state provided opportunities to move milk to a variety of outlets. According to current and former MMPA leaders, Rasch could be direct and was bold enough to ask for what the market should be willing to pay.

When MMPA wanted to donate milk to the victims of the Flint Water Crisis in 2016, Rasch was the go-to-guy making the essential connections with the right customers to make the generosity of MMPA members a reality.

Rasch is responsible for negotiating contracts with processing plant customers and milk supplying members, while working on business development and strategic planning for MMPA. As head of the milk sales department, he oversees the logistics, management and strategic goals of marketing member milk.

Rasch served on the board of directors for the United Dairy Industry of Michigan and currently serves on the Michigan Dairy Memorial and Scholarship Foundation Board. He also served as the secretary of the Great Lakes Southern Milk Marketing Agency and has worked on taskforces with the National Milk Producers Federation concerning Federal Order reform.

Prior to his service at MMPA, Rasch was a field auditor at USDA. He earned his bachelor of science degree from Michigan State University.

Carl resides in Morrice with his wife, Roxanne, and together they have five children.

Congratulations to Carl Rasch on 40 years of serving MMPA. The cooperative and the dairy industry are grateful for his service and are proud to recognize him as an Honoree of the Michigan Dairy and Memorial Scholarship Foundation.



Alvin J. Thelen

The Michigan Dairy Memorial and Scholarship Foundation (MDMSF) at Michigan State University (MSU) is honoring the late Al Thelen for his many decades of contributions to the dairy industry through his involvement in developing one of the nation's first computer systems for recording dairy production records.

Thelen was born on the family homestead south of Fowler, the tenth of 12 children. He and his wife Marie raised six children on their 100-acre Clinton County farm south of St. Johns.

Thelen graduated from the Agriculture Shortcourse Program at Michigan State College (MSC) in 1949. Upon graduation, he accepted a job as a Dairy Herd Improvement Association (DHIA) technician in Eaton County. From there, he was drafted by the U.S. Army and served two years as the Chaplain's Assistant in Fort Riley, Kansas, during the Korean War. After the war, Thelen took a position with Michigan State's Dairy Extension Department, and was subsequently approached by what was then the MSC Dairy Department to begin developing the first version of today's DHIA data processing system. Prior to that point, all records were manually calculated in the field by DHIA technicians. Under Thelen's leadership and direction, computerization of milk recordkeeping systems became a reality. Thelen dedicated nearly 50 years of service to the MSC Dairy Department, eventually known as the MSU Department of Animal Science, and was Michigan DHIA General Manager until his retirement in July, 1997.



Thelen was recognized by National DHIA, receiving the first ever Martin A. Wilson Memorial Award in 1989 and by the MSU College of Agriculture and Natural Resources as its Distinguished Service to Agriculture Award winner in 2000.

In addition to his lifelong commitment to a career in the Michigan dairy industry and improving milk production record tracking systems, Thelen continued farming and volunteered with multiple organizations, including the MSU Credit Union, the Knights of Columbus, 4-H, and the MSU President's Club. He became a member of the Knights of Columbus in 1948, and served in a variety of roles including editor of the Michigan Columbian Newspaper. Thelen also was devoted to the Michigan State Grange working diligently to expand its positive impact on society. Thelen served on numerous state boards and foundations, including National DHIA, the American Dairy Science Association, and the Michigan Association of Farmer Cooperatives. Last, but certainly not least, Thelen was known for his passion for MSU Hockey. As avid fans and supporters, his family held season tickets for a number of years.

J. William "Bill" Thomas

Bill Thomas was born in Palmyra, Utah, March 25, 1918, to John B. and Kate Annie (Tolhurst) Thomas. He died October 15, 2014. On January 6, 1945, Bill married Carolyn Palmer and they have 4 children.

He earned a BS at Utah State University and attended graduate school at the University of Wisconsin and Cornell University. During WWII, Bill was involved in war-time defense chemical research at Northwestern University. After the war he returned to Cornell and received his PhD in 1946.

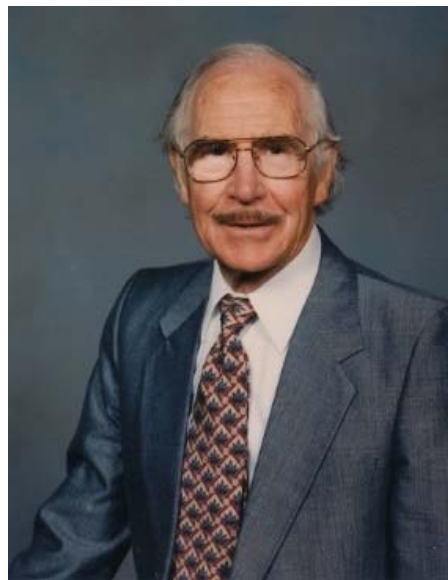
Bill was employed by the USDA Dairy Research Center at Beltsville, MD as a biochemist-animal husbandman from 1946 until 1960 when he joined the Michigan State University, Department of Dairy Science and retired from Michigan State University in 1985.

As a professor at MSU, Bill's work was primarily research related to the nutrition, feeding and management of dairy cattle. He supervised the studies of numerous graduate students and had more than 250 publications in peer-reviewed journals articles and several hundred more in other printed forms. He presented research findings at annual American Dairy Science Association meetings for sixty-five years. Bill received local and national awards in his field, the most notable being the Borden Award, the American Feed Manufacturer's Award and the Superior Service Award from USDA for outstanding research with dairy cattle.

Also, during his time at Michigan State University he presented well-received extension dairy nutrition courses and other educational programs for farmers throughout Michigan and in other states. He was instrumental in the development of the Spartan Dairy Ration Evaluator, Spartan-1.0. He consulted in Russia, East Germany, Romania, China, Viet Nam, Mexico and Brazil.

Bill is listed in American Men of Science and Who's Who in America. He belonged to numerous professional organizations and was an Emeritus Professor at MSU. Bill was awarded the honor of being a Fellow in the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Dairy Science Association, the American Society of Animal Science and the American Society of Nutritional Sciences.

In his retirement he was involved in commercially sponsored field research. Bill enjoyed downhill skiing (which he did well into his 90s), gardening and photography.



Francis and Wilma Trierweiler

Francis and Wilma Trierweiler started what is now known today as TDI Farms in Westphalia, Michigan back in 1955 when they were married. They are being recognized by the Michigan Dairy Memorial and Scholarship Foundation for their dedication and love of God, family, farm and community.

Francis was born in 1930 on what is now a sixth generation operating dairy farm. Wilma also was born and raised on her own family farm in Pewamo, Michigan in 1934. Although not being able to attend high school because he was needed at home on the farm, Francis did attend for two years Michigan State College, as it was known as in the early 1950s. Francis started farming on his own shortly before marrying and not long after was called to naval duty for two years in Maryland. Being newly married, they both moved to another state many miles from home and sent what little money they had back home to help the farm survive in their absence.

The couple had five children – Frank, Janet, Julie, Robert (deceased) and Paul. They also have two wonderful daughter in laws and one son in law – Terri, Tracie and Frank (Freund).



Francis and Wilma have been active members of St Mary's Catholic Church in Westphalia as well as countless boards, committees and Catholic societies. Wilma has always been a perfect example of humility, grace and Christianity. She was a mother always there for her children, neighbors or friends evident by her willingness to serve on the Christian Mothers Society and Daughters of Isabella as well as countless other volunteer positions in the community.

Francis is known for his dedication of talents, hard work, work ethic and "can do" attitude which has served his family and community in many different ways. While getting the farm going again after his return from naval duty, Francis took on much work to provide for his young family, including two winters at General Motors, selling MoorMans feed and Northrup King seeds. He also ran a custom chopping business with his brother early on to help with reducing equipment costs on his way to achieving his dairy farm plans.

Francis received soil conservationist of the year in 1976, and other activities included Pewamo-Westphalia school board, Westphalia Township Supervisor, Westphalia Township Assessor, Clinton County Road Commissioner, and Knights of Columbus 4th degree. On top of these accomplishments he also sold John Deere farm equipment for 16 years, which he enjoyed servicing at other farms and forming lifelong friendships with many trusted fellow farmers.

Francis and Wilma were innovative and early adopters of technology as it became available. One example is while most farms were putting in storage for ear corn in the 1960s, they invested in a grain drying bin which was one of only a handful in the region at the time.

As of today, Francis and Wilma have 14 grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren (with one on the way). Directly employed at the farm are seven family members with many others pitching in when needed. Through their perseverance and tireless giving of time, talent and guidance the specialized dairy farm they started with the purchase of 40 heifers back in 1957 has grown incrementally to 1600 cows and cropping more than 3200 acres.

Francis and Wilma have been blessed with much but have always given back to others. This is a guiding principle in their lives and they are shining examples of God, Country, Family and Community!

2018

Lester E. Langeland

Lester was born in 1927 near Marne, Michigan. He was raised on his family's farm, and became involved in farm work at a young age. He attended Coopersville schools where he was active in FFA, serving as President of the Coopersville chapter in 1946.

Lester and his wife Adrianna raised 7 children together while working on the family business Langeland Farms. In 1955, Lester assumed management of the farm, milking 20 cows at the time. In 1980, son Merle joined in partnership of the farm, helping to grow the farm from 165 milking cows to 255 cows when their second son Marlin joined the business. The farm continued to grow with addition of a new milking parlor in 2007 to its current size of 855 cows with 3000 acres farmed.

Lester became involved in activities off the farm with his sons now active in Langeland Farms. He owned Coopersville Hardware and Feed from 1984-2012. Following his retirement from the store in 2012, his daughter and son-in-law took over ownership of the business. He was a seed dealer for Funk Seeds, earning the citation of Regional Dealer of the Year in 1983.

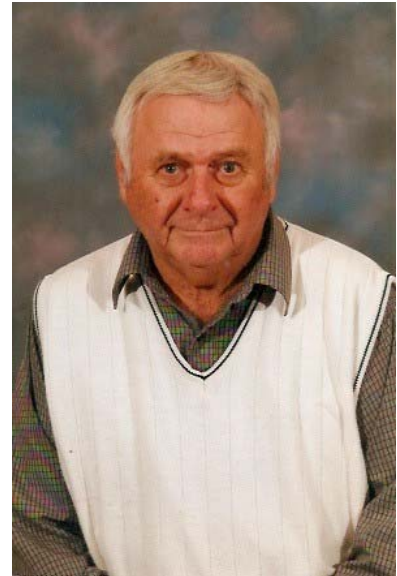
Lester generously served on the Ottawa Soil and Water Conservation District Board for over 20 years. His service went beyond director as he sat as chairman for over 10 of those years. His position on the board was integral in the direction of the Conservation District.

His service to the FFA organization continued throughout his lifetime. Lester received citations from the National FFA Organization and the Coopersville chapter for his assistance to its programs. As a producer member of the Dairy Farmers of America (DFA), Lester served as delegate to the regional meeting.

He also participated in Policy Study Tours led by Michigan State University to Argentina and Mexico, focusing on key issues of agricultural trade and marketing. As a member of the Ottawa County Farm Bureau for 64 years, Lester attended many national conventions and served as membership chairman and delegate to the state convention.

Community service was a priority for Lester along with service to agriculture. He devoted 10 years as superintendent of the Lamont Christian Reformed Sunday School and as president and board member for the Lamont Christian School.

In recognition of the service of Lester Langeland to the state of Michigan and to animal agriculture, it is most fitting to recognize him today as an Honoree of the Michigan Dairy Memorial and Scholarship Foundation.



William R. Lutherloh

Bill was born in 1943 in Carson City, Michigan. At 2.5 pounds they took him home in a shoebox and placed him by a warm woodstove. Little did they know if he would make it through the night, let alone become a devoted son, brother, husband, father, grandfather, and great grandfather. Bill grew up on the farm his great grandfather purchased in 1893, where he still resides today. Bill attended school at the Sheridan Rural Agricultural School, where he was an active member of the FFA. He graduated in 1961 and was awarded the FFA state farmer of the year and the citizenship award.

After graduating high school Bill worked with his father on their small dairy farm. In 1968 Bill decided to start his career as a field representative working for Ira Wilson and Son Dairy, at their Carson City branch. Bill was employed there until they shut their doors in 1971. He immediately started his long journey with ICMFA, and later DFA, the following Monday, where he worked as a field representative until 1983. He was then promoted to field supervisor of the field department, where he served until he retired in 2005.

During Bill's many years of service to the dairy industry he was a part of many organizations, councils and boards. He was the vice president of the Michigan Dairy Industry Conference board for 18 years. He also sat on council three, for the Interstate Milk Shipper's council. Bill received some prestigious awards. In 1981, he received Field Person of the Year. In 1998 he received the Industry Service Award. He also really enjoyed promoting milk at the Michigan State Fair on Dairy Day.

With many achievements in the dairy industry, Bill decided to hang his hat up in 2005 after 37 years. During his years of service and after, he has been a devoted family man. He married his wife, Diana, in 1965. They will soon be celebrating 53 years of marriage. They have two children, Lucinda and Gene, four grandchildren and one great granddaughter.

Bill also enjoys serving in the community. Bill and Diana are members of the North Plains Community Church. They are also members of the Eastern Stars. Bill is a life member of the Free and Accepted Masons of Michigan he has served on many affiliated organizations of the Masons, including on the Board of General Purposes for the Grand Lodge. He has also been a trustee for the Fairplains Township board for over 30 years.

