CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF WISCONSIN FFA ALUMNI CONVENTIONS AND PAST PRESIDENTS OF THE WI FFA ALUMNI

Compiled for the 2020 Wisconsin FFA Alumni Convention in Waukesha by Past President Darlene Arneson using Past Presidents PowerPoint started by Kathy Breunig and input from other past presidents!
Note:

We were not able to find pictures for all Past Presidents. OUR APOLOGIES.

The symbol * by a name means they are deceased.
CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF WISCONSIN FFA ALUMNI CONVENTIONS - 2020
FROM HUMBLE EARLY COUNCIL MEETINGS AND BEGINNINGS AT GREEN LAKE
LIEDER HAUS - UP THE HILL AT GREEN LAKE
100 Years of Agricultural Education/FFA in Wisconsin

by Floyd Deering

A HISTORY OF VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE IN WISCONSIN 1906-1976

By Floyd Deering
The Smith-Hughes Act
Strengthening Agricultural Education Since 1917

Smith-Hughes Vocational Education Act
Centennial
A History of Vocational Agriculture in
1900-1976 1976-1995 1995-

By Floyd J. Doering

Updated by David R. Lautsch, Brenda R. Scheel and all who

Blue Jackets & Gold Standards
75 Years of FFA History
THE ALUMNI HAD COUNCIL AND MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS DURING THE JUNE WISCONSIN FFA CONVENTION
1973-75 Art Kurtz, Wisconsin*

1975-78 Armin Fruechte, Westby*

1970’S
1978-79 Erwin Zweifel, Mount Horeb *

1979-80 Victor Voigt, Valders
During the 1979 June Wisconsin FFA Convention at Green Lake, immediate past Wisconsin FFA President John Arneson spoke to the Wisconsin FFA Alumni meeting in Lieder Haus.

His speech was based on:

- A - Agriculture
- L - Leaders
- U - Understanding
- M - Members
- N - Needs
- I - Interests
1980’S

1980-82 Robert Wolfe, Brodhead
First Convention was at Marshfield in 1981. Bob Wolfport from Ace Bolt and Nut Co. paid for the full convention.

REMEMBERS 1998-99 GERALD STEPHANI, SEYMOUR
PROBABLY THE LAST MEETINGS WHEN THE ALUMNI MET “UP THE HILL” AT GREEN LAKE IN LIEDER HAUS
1982-83 RANDY MEYER, LOYAL
1983-84 Gary Beastrom, Athens

1984-85 Jim Sipiorski, Denmark
1984-85 Jim Sipiorski, Denmark
1985-86 Tom Parslow, Mauston

1986-87 Russ Utech, Merrill
1987-88 Terry Petersen, Denmark

1988-89 Ken Natzke, Bonduel
1989-90 Sue Krull-Schultz,
New Holstein

Favorite memory from the convention-
The Wisconsin FFA Alumni members I met and made as lifelong friends. The contagious energy and spirit among the convention attendees expressing their commitment to FFA, their alumni membership and wanting to be part of the Wisconsin FFA Alumni and FFA legacy – past, present and future.
What was your focus or biggest accomplishment that year? That the center of our State FFA Alumni Council was always about the organization – not about individuals and doing our best work keeping the FFA motto at the forefront… Learning to Do, Doing to Learn, Earning to Live and Living to Serve as we planned and accomplished activities and increased membership.
KEN NATZKE, TERRY PETERSEN AND MYSELF WERE THE STATE FFA ALUMNI PRESIDENT’S IN I BELIEVE 1988, 1989 AND 1990. SINCE THIS TIME, KEN, TERRY AND MYSELF HAVE TRIED TO SPEND TIME TOGETHER AT LEAST ONCE PER YEAR ALONG WITH KEN’S WIFE JOYCE. WE HAVE A VERY SPECIAL FRIENDSHIP WE SHARE DUE TO MEETING VIA OUR MEMBERSHIP IN THE WISCONSIN FFA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION.

1989-90 Sue Krull-Schultz,

New Holstein
1990'S

- 1990-91 Larry Osterberg, Colfax*

- 1991-92 Darrel Birnschein, Sevastopol
1992-93 Ronna Morton-Ballmer, Clinton

1993-94 Don Southworth, Marathon
1994-95 Dennis Van Vreede, Freedom
1995-96 Francis Steiner, Granton*

1996-97 Richard Gimler, Watertown
1997-98 Dr. Virgil Martinson, Stoughton*

1998-99 Gerald Stephani, Seymour
"REFLECTIONS FROM JERRY STEPHANI:

WHERE WAS THE CONVENTION HELD AT? STEVENS POINT

FAVORITE MEMORY (OR MEMORIES) FROM THE CONVENTION: BOB KEOUGH FALLING OUT OF THE WHEEL BARROW DURING THE FUND RAISING EVENT FOR THE CONVENTION."
FAVORITE MEMORY FROM THE NATIONAL CONVENTION: HITCHING A RIDE FROM DENMARK THE LAST MINUTE TO MEET SEYMOUR AS A CHAPERONE TO THE NATIONAL CONVENTION. ALSO, BACKING THE FFA STUDENTS WHEN THEY WERE ACCUSED OF DOING SOMETHING THEY DID NOT DO.

Other thoughts you’d like to share! First Convention was at Marshfield. Bob Wolfort from Ace Bolt and Nut Co. paid for the full convention.
WHAT WAS YOUR FOCUS OR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THAT YEAR?
HELP SET UP THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS OFFICE.
GETTING 5 FILING CABINETS FOR FREE. WANTED TO GET ALL HISTORY INFORMATION SCANNED ONTO MICROFICHE AT THE TIME. UNABLE TO GET THIS COMPLETED. STOPPING A POTENTIAL LAWSUIT FROM THE EAU CLAIRE CONVENTION.

WORKED TO GET GUIDELINES FOLLOWED BY THE NATIONAL FFA YOUTH EXCHANGE. PROCEDURES WERE NOT BEING FOLLOWED BY THE EXCHANGE PROGRAM. TERRY PETERSEN, KEN NATZKE AND I INTERVIEWED VIRGIL MARTINSON ON HOW THE WI FFA ALUMNI STARTED.
GOING TO MINNESOTA WITH TERRY PETERSEN AND JOHN LEITERMAN TO HELP JUMP START THEIR STATE ALUMNI. JOHN MISSING A PACKERS GAME IN THE PLAYOFFS, AS HE HAD SEASON TICKETS. THIS WAS THE SECOND TIME JOHN EVER MISSED A GAME. MINNESOTA WAS HARASSING JOHN THAT GREEN BAY WAS IN A BLACKOUT AND HE HAD TO COME TO MINNESOTA TO WATCH THE GAME.
WHAT WI FFA ALUMNI EXECUTIVE SECRETARY DID YOU WORK WITH? BETWEEN VIRGIL MARTINSON AND I WAS THE TRANSITION IN GETTING AN EXECUTIVE SECRETARY. IT WAS A GREAT HONOR WORKING WITH JEAN AS OUR SECRETARY AND TREASURER. DIANE AMERA CAME ON AS OUR FIRST EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR. I REMEMBER BEING ON THE FENCE OF WHO TO HIRE. WE ONLY HAD ONE APPLICATION BY DEADLINE. DIANE’S APPLICATION CAME IN AFTER THE DEADLINE.

1998-99 Gerald Stephani, Seymour
2000’s

1999-00 Robert Keough, Argyle
Where was the convention held at? Wisconsin Dells

Other thoughts you’d like to share: Going to the Ball game in Milwaukee. The VIP Award we received in 2014 from the FFA was a great honor and appreciated.

Bob Keough’s recollections
Favorite memory from the convention - confusion
What was your focus or biggest accomplishment that year? the national convention
2000-01 Dale Beaty, Milton
2001-02 John Leiterman, Denmark*
2002-03 Victoria Harter, Oconto Falls

2003-04 Scott Gimler, Watertown
2004-05 Pat Igl, Antigo
The challenges we have met this past year have added to our strong foundation as we continue to build for the future of the students we serve. Our community is rebuilding. Not even a devastating church fire, followed by a tornado, can deter our mission to build on our strengths and encourage our students to do their best.

Today our group stands as strong as if it were made of brick and mortar, offering the support and guidance that students need to build their own strong “house” of individuality and ability.
MY YEAR WAS A BIT STRESSFUL AS STOUGHTON WAS HIT BY AN F3 TORNADO IN AUGUST AND THE ARNESON HOME FARM WAS DESTROYED.

WE ALSO HAD FINANCIAL ISSUES THE STATE COUNCIL HAD TO DEAL WITH ALONG WITH TRANSITIONS WITH EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS.
PAT IGL, JOYCE GUST, VICKY HARTER AND I WERE QUITE A TEAM. WE LITERALLY RAN THE ORGANIZATION DURING SOME ROUGH TRANSITIONS. I SPENT MORE TIME IN OCONTO FALLS AND ANTIGO WORKING ON FILES, FINANCES, MEMBERSHIP AND WE ALL PULLED TOGETHER TO KEEP THE ORGANIZATION GOING.
IT WAS QUITE A TIME FOR ALL OF US.

I THINK MY GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT FOR MY TIME ON COUNCIL WAS THAT WE MADE IT THROUGH!! WE BROUGHT BACK THE PRESIDENT’S CONFERENCE, REVAMPED THE COMMITTEES, GOT OUR FINANCIAL HOUSE BACK IN ORDER, AND WE HAD A LOT OF FUN! OUR STATE LEADERS CONFERENCE WAS IN OHIO AND WE KEPT THE BAR NEXT TO THE HOTEL HOPPING!
MY MOST MEMORABLE CONVENTIONS:

1987- JOHN AND I GOT ENGAGED AT THE GREEN BAY CONVENTION!

MY DAD, JERRY MAURER, LOVED THE CONVENTIONS AND WE HAD THE BEST ROOM PARTIES WITH THE VERONA, STOUGHTON AND OTHER SECTION 5 ALUMNI MEMBERS! VERONA TOOK A VAN TO THE CONVENTION AT UW-STOUT AND THAT WAS QUITE A TRIP!

RECOLLECTIONS BY DARLENE ARNESON 2005-2006
Our state Convention was held in Tomah early Feb. 2007. I attended the National Alumni Workshop in Nashville. Jamie Butke was the Executive Secretary.
2007-08 Dennis Jesberger, Sun Prairie
Dennis was the third consecutive Wisconsin FFA Alumni President to serve from Section 5.
2008-2009 Ken Seering, Denmark
Biggest accomplishment and focus: Membership Growth
Favorite memory: So many GREAT people. We had a “say” back then, not today!”
Convention held at Ho Chunk in Baraboo

Favorite memory: Support for Ag Ed and FFA
FOCUS WAS ON LOCAL AFFILIATES ASSISTING THEIR AG ED INSTRUCTORS AND FFA MEMBERS ON CAREER GOALS

Ken Seering
President 2008-2009
2009-10 KEN HARTER, OCONTO FALLS
2010-11 Herman Seebandt, Neillsville

2011-12 Brent Bailey, Tomah (resigned)

* deceased
“Don’t Be the Missing Piece”

Wisconsin FFA Alumni
State Convention
February 10, 11 & 12, 2012

ALUMNI
Past National FFA Alumni President Diane Amera, from Stoughton (back row second from right) poses with other National Council members and Wisconsin Council members. - 2/11/11
31st Annual
Wisconsin FFA Alumni
Convention

POINTing in the Right Direction
in 2011

WI FFA Alumni State Convention
February 11-13, 2011
Hosted by: Sections 1, 2, 3 and 7
Ramada Inn and Convention Center
Stevens Point, WI
2012-13 James Check, Milton
Did you attend National FFA Events?

Alumni Development Conference was held in 2013, Green Bay, which I helped out and had great participation. Attended National Convention.
What was your focus or biggest accomplishment that year? *Worked at establishing the WI FFA Alumni Sponsored Support Grant and the WI FFA Alumni Sponsored New/Reactivated Chapter Grant*

Where was the convention held at? *The Holiday Inn, Fond du Lac, WI*
FAVORITE MEMORY (OR MEMORIES) FROM THE CONVENTION: THE ENERGY AND PARTICIPATION OF THE CONVENTION WAS AWESOME.

FAVORITE MEMORY FROM THE NATIONAL CONVENTION: MEETING FELLOW FFA ALUMNI FROM ACROSS THE STATES AND NETWORKING.
2014-15 Kathy Breunig, Sauk Prairie
What was your focus or biggest accomplishment that year?

*Council teamwork and communicating with our members, the addition of affiliation type membership from the National FFA Alumni.*
WHERE WAS THE CONVENTION HELD AT?
CONCOURSE, MADISON

FAVORITE MEMORY FROM THE CONVENTION—THE SMILES ON PEOPLE’S FACES

FAVORITE MEMORY FROM THE NATIONAL CONVENTION—BEING ABLE TO REPRESENT WISCONSIN ALUMNI MEMBERS ON A NATIONAL LEVEL
2016-2017  Julie Spoke, Lake Mills
2017-2018 Dan Follendorf, Sparta
WHAT WAS YOUR FOCUS OR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THAT YEAR?

RELEASE OF THE NEW WISCONSIN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM ALLOWING $50 SCHOLARSHIPS FOR AN FFA MEMBER FROM EVERY FFA DISTRICT TO ATTEND FFA CONFERENCES.

In the 10 years of being on this council I have met many unique and talented individuals from across the state as well as on the national level through all the national conferences I have attended over the past several years.
“IT WAS AN HONOR TO SERVE ON THE WISCONSIN FFA ALUMNI COUNCIL AND BECOMING PRESIDENT. FFA HAS A LONG TIME BEEN A PART OF WHO I AM. THE WISCONSIN FFA ALUMNI COUNCIL IS A HARD-WORKING GROUP. THEY TAKE THE TIME TO MEET INDIVIDUALS AND CHAPTERS ACROSS THE STATE AND ENCOURAGE ADVOCACY FOR AGRICULTURE EDUCATION. THEY ARE A GREAT GROUP TO WORK WITH.”

2017-2018 Dan Follendorf, Sparta
CARI SABEL 2019-2020
Past Presidents Section was originally created for the Past President’s Committee by Kathy Hartmann-Breunig, Sauk Prairie, 2014 President.

If you can help us find missing pictures, please send to WI Executive Director Cheryl Steinbach.
WISCONSIN STATE FFA OFFICER INVOLVEMENT AT CONVENTION
THE WISCONSIN FFA OFFICERS APPRECIATE SO MUCH BEING A PART OF THE WISCONSIN FFA ALUMNI CONVENTION. THIS IS A FANTASTIC OPPORTUNITY FOR FFA MEMBERS TO SAY THANK YOU TO OUR ALUMNI MEMBERS AS WELL AS PARTICIPATE THROUGH WORKSHOPS, REFLECTIONS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES.
"IT ONLY MAKES SENSE AS THESE OFFICERS WILL SOON TAKE OFF THEIR BLUE AND GOLD JACKETS AND JOIN THE RANKS OF THE FFA ALUMNI. SEEING THE FFA ALUMNI IN ACTION HELPS THE OFFICERS SEE THE SEAMLESS TRANSITION FROM MEMBER TO ALUMNI AND WHAT A BETTER WAY THAN AT A TIME TO CELEBRATE THE WISCONSIN FFA ALUMNI’S SUCCESS."
“ALSO THE STATE FFA OFFICER TEAM HAVE BECOME LIFETIME ALUMNI MEMBERS FOR MANY YEARS....IT HAPPENED WHEN I WAS AN OFFICER IN 1985-86 AND I BELIEVE WAS HAPPENING BEFORE THAT.

Cheryl Zimmerman
Wisconsin FFA Executive Secretary”
THE WISCONSIN FFA FOUNDATION PURCHASED 11 TABLE-TOP COW PARADE COWS FOR THE 2005-06 STATE FFA OFFICER TEAM - SOLD AT THE 2007 CONVENTION
“YES THAT STARTED WITH THE COW PARADE IN MADISON. MARY GAGNON WAS ABLE TO GET THE MINI COWS AND THEN THE OFFICERS PAINTED THEM. THEN EVERY YEAR SINCE THEN THE OFFICERS HAVE SELECTED A PAINTED ITEM TO DONATE.”

Cheryl Zimmerman
Wisconsin FFA Executive Secretary
40 DOWN AND ONTO THE NEXT DECADE OF CONVENTIONS SUPPORTING THE BLUE AND GOLD!

THANKS FOR SHARING YOUR TIME WITH US!