

Centennial Celebrated at Legislative Connection

4-H members and their parents, volunteers, and Extension staff were treated to a special 4-H Centennial luncheon at the 2002 Legislative Connection in Springfield. While enjoying a break from the regular Connection activities, attendees were treated to a special lighting of the 4-H Centennial cake and a program involving some outstanding 4-H alumni. Don Floyd, Chairman and



CEO of National 4-H Council was also in attendance at the event. Rod Stoll, Director of Development for the Illinois 4-H Foundation served as M.C. for the noon program.

Salute to Marguerite Thompson!

Marguerite Thompson has been involved in the LaSalle County 4-H program for over 65 years. She began her 4-H career at eight years of age by attending her mother's all-girls club. When she began her 4-H career there were clubs for girls and clubs for boys. When she was too old to continue in 4-H, she continued her affiliation by becoming an assistant leader. After college, marriage and the birth of her two sons, she decided it was time to get her own children involved.

Marguerite organized the Fox River Warriors 51 years ago. Her children, grandchildren, and now great-grandchildren have been members of her club.

During her active involvement, she helped create the LaSalle County Youth Committee and served as secretary for the LaSalle County 4-H Fair Board. She has provided countless educational classes on safety, leadership, county award applications, character building, public speaking, demonstrations, visual arts and so much more. She also served as Floriculture Superintendent for over 50 years. She has been a judge for many flower-arranging contests at many county fairs.

Marguerite has recently retired as the Organizational Leader of the club she started more than 50 years ago. During her years as a 4-H Volunteer leader, she has touched the lives of many. Hundreds of youth and adults will always remember her leadership, international nights, and the positive directions she provided. Most of all, they remember their 4-H experiences that she provided through her club and county involvement.

Marguerite, we salute your more than 65 years of 4-H.

Help us Spotlight Other Volunteers!

The Alumni Sub-committee is seeking the names and stories of volunteers from throughout the State who have contributed more than 50 years of service to 4-H. Please send their names and information to Sandra Lignell at lignells@mail.aces.uiuc.edu.

National 4-H Hall of Fame Nominees

For the 4-H Centennial, the National Association of Extension 4-H Agents (NAE4-HA) wanted to instigate a National 4-H Hall of Fame. This will be a virtual Hall of Fame – available for anyone to view on a national web-site (I'll post the address in the NEXT newsletter.)

Illinois was able to submit three names for inclusion in the Hall of Fame and to our delight, ***all three Illinois nominees were selected in the first 100 individuals to be included.*** They were inducted in the Hall of Fame at a special ceremony on April 11 during the 2002 National 4-H Conference. We have already highlighted two of our nominees, *William B. Otwell* and *Lawrence Bevier*. The focus of this newsletter is our third nominee, *Orion Samuelson*.

Orion Samuelson

Orion Samuelson is known by many across the nation as the *Voice of Agriculture*. He can be heard six days a week on Chicago WGN Radio and the Agri-Voice network of 50 stations where he presents 28 agricultural reports daily. Orion is also heard daily on more than 260 radio stations with his syndicated *National Farm Report* and on 110 stations with his syndicated *Samuelson Sez*. In addition to his popular radio broadcasts, his weekly *U.S. Farm Report* is telecast to 190 independent television stations and 11,000 cable systems serving 38 million homes in North America. He has served as Agricultural Services Director at WGN since 1960.

His life-long commitment to agriculture has been recognized by organizations in all facets of the agricultural industry. In May of 2001, Orion was named a Laureate of the Lincoln Academy of Illinois and received the Lincoln medal from Illinois Governor George Ryan. This is the highest award bestowed by the state of Illinois. A week later, at the University of Illinois commencement ceremonies, President James Stukel presented Orion with the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters.

He is also recognized as one of the strongest supporters of agricultural youth of Illinois and across the nation. At the 1997 Illinois State Fair, Governor Jim Edgar changed the name of the Junior Livestock Building to the Orion Samuelson Junior Livestock Building as a tribute to Orion's nearly four decades of service to the agricultural youth of Illinois. He has received the National 4-H Alumni Award and National 4-H Partner Award from USDA and National 4-H Council.

Orion has traveled internationally to 43 countries to cover agricultural production and trade for his radio and television shows, including Australia, Malaysia, England, Hungary, France, Denmark, India, Norway, Sweden, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Philippines, Thailand, Peoples Republic of China, Brazil, the former USSR, Vietnam, and others.

Samuelson is also active in areas outside broadcasting. He is Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Illinois Agricultural Leadership Foundation and a Trustee of the Cornerstone Foundation of Lutheran Social Services. He currently serves as Co-Chair, with former U.S. Senator Paul Simon, of the University of Illinois Citizens for Extension, a group that seeks increased financial support for Extension programs. Over the past three years, this fruitful effort has allowed Extension to hire ninety new 4-H youth development educators that provide leadership and support to 4-H programs in every community across the state.

Orion tributes his early training in 4-H for the successes that he continues to experience in his professional life. It is a well-known fact that without his undying love and passion for youth and agriculture, America would be lacking a truly great asset. Orion lives each day to the fullest and his life embodies the 4-H motto, "To Make the Best Better."

The 4-H Centennial lists ideas for the upcoming 4-H Centennial. Send ideas and comments to: Illinois 4-H Centennial, Deb Stocker, 302 E. John, Suite 1901, Champaign, IL 61820 (217) 333-0910.
<http://www.4-h.uiuc.edu/events/centennial.html>