

MESSENGER-INQUIRER

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Farm Update

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AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES
EDUCATION

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Daviess County Agricultural Hall of Fame

Daviess County is home to generations of agricultural affiliated people and businesses who were, or are, leaders in their farm, family, and community. In an effort to honor those people and businesses, the Daviess County Agricultural Visionaries Hall of Fame was created in 2022. The inaugural class of fifteen across three categories was inducted last year.

The mission of the Daviess County Agricultural Visionaries Hall of Fame is to recognize visionaries, founders, servants, and innovators of agriculture in Daviess County. The Agricultural Visionaries Committee has submitted three inductees across three categories for the second class.

The first category recognized is business. This is for people involved in successful agricultural business management/ownership, which served to improve the lives and opportunities for farm families in the region.

This year's inductee is T.J. Turley, founder of The T.J. Turley Company. T.J. Turley was one of the pioneer agricultural merchants in Owensboro and Daviess County. Beginning in 1905, he founded and built one of the largest agricultural implement and hardware providers in the state. He strongly supported youth fair agricultural projects.

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The T.J. Turley Company was the largest supplier in the area of International Harvester, Allis-Chalmers, and Oliver Farm Machinery lines. The company believed in customer service and satisfaction with their products. Their trademark was, "If it's from Turley's, it's good."

Past honorees in this category include Charles Field -Field Packing, The Foons Family - Velvet Milk, The Miles Family - Miles Farm Supply, The O'Bryan Family - Owensboro Grain, and William Rapier - Rapier Grain and Feed.

The second area is service. This category honors people who led successful careers in the agricultural service sector and whose efforts led to improved lives and opportunities for farm families in the region.

This year's inductee, Ben Allen Burns was a grain and tobacco farmer and partner in the Burns Brothers farming operations. A graduate of Western Kentucky University, he taught vocational agriculture at Daviess County High School from 1946 to 1977. In 1977 he retired from teaching to lead Daviess County's drainage ditch maintenance program. His first project was cleaning the Panther Creek basin. He was elected as a county commissioner to Daviess County Fiscal Court in 1985.

Tom Curtsinger, Daviess County Extension Agent for Agriculture said, "Burns was one of the 'pioneers' who helped bring progress to local farmers. He contributed a lot to Daviess County agriculture."

Past honorees in this category include Frank Cox, Tom Curtsinger, Paul Irish, Charles Loyal, and Jack McClure.

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The final category is production innovation. This honors people who experienced risk with acceptance and demonstration of new farming production enterprises and techniques that led to wide adoption and improved lives and opportunities for farm families in the region.

Inductee Allen Reid came from Scotland in 1873 to do the books for his brother's tobacco business in Livermore. Soon upon entering the United States, he discovered a love of peaches which overpowered his interest in bookkeeping. He took his love of fruit trees and moved to the Thruston area, buying land to begin Reid's Orchard. Allen Reid was also the first to introduce alfalfa to the area. Allen Reid was a community leader in advocating for rural development and road improvement.

The farm is now a little smaller than when Allen Reid purchased the 300 acres of land. Some of the original property purchased is now part of Yellow Creek Park. Reid's Orchard continues, being owned and operated by the Reid family heirs.

Past honorees in this category include William Crabtree, J.C. Ellis III, William Foster, Murray Hagan, and Charles William Hayden.

Several generous businesses and individuals have provided financial support to facilitate the purchase of plaques for the Hall of Fame classes. These large, attractive plaques will include the name, an engraved image, and brief biography of the person. They will be on permanent display in a gallery at the Owensboro Museum of Science and History. For more information or to nominate a person or family for this honor who meets one of the categories above, please contact Clint Hardy or Leigh Ann Kuegel.

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All are invited to attend a reception on Tuesday, January 30, the evening before Ag Expo, from 5-6:30 p.m. at the Owensboro Convention Center. Come join the family and friends of the honorees and hear stories about the award recipients.

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