

National 4-H Hall of Fame 2016

Tennessee



James L. (Jim) Byford
Dean Emeritus, College of Agriculture &
Applied Sciences, U.T. Martin

Home: Martin, TN

Nominated by: Tennessee 4-H

Major 4-H Accomplishments:

Initiated TN 4-H Wildlife Project (over 30,000 members annually); TN 4-H FACE (Food and Cover Establishment) Contest; TN 4-H Wildlife Conference, the longest running state conservation camp in the nation (over 35 years); TN 4-H Wildlife Judging Contest, which later became national as WHEP that continues today and was designation a National Program of Distinction; and first regional 4-H wildlife volunteer leaders conference. 4-H-related awards received: TN Youth Conservation Program of the Year; Cavendar Award; TN Citation for Distinguished Service to 4-H; National 4-H Distinguished Service Award (NAE4-HA); TN Friend of 4-H; Jim Byford 4-H Endowment (contributions by youth leaders in TN and throughout the U.S.); National Partner in 4-H Award.

Biography:

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Jim was awarded the NAE4-HA Distinguished Service Award in 1979. In 1987, he became Dean of the College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences at the University of Tennessee at Martin. In that role, he was untiring in his efforts to recruit students to campus and made sure 4-H members were always welcome to events and campus visits. He often volunteered to assist with events at State 4-H Roundup by sharing stories and songs around a campfire. At UTM, he served as advisor and mentor to the Collegiate 4-H Club. Jim was recognized with the prestigious State Friend of 4-H Award in 2011. In 2014-15, he served on a task force that successfully received \$15 million to purchase/build a Tennessee 4-H conference and business retreat center.

Quote:

After my PhD, I was employed as the Georgia Extension wildlife specialist, not sure if I would like the youth part of my job. But thanks to good mentoring from colleague Ted Walker, who taught me the secret of successfully working with youth, I was hooked! The secret? "To be successful working with young people, you have to get to know them — and they, you. Get out there, play ball, swim—do whatever they're doing. Once they know you, they'll trust you—and after they trust you, they'll listen."



Jim often teaches with his guitar.



Jim often uses the campfire as a teaching medium for volunteer leaders.



Jim leading a snake hunt in a swamp about 1980.