Former UF Agriculture Dean Larry Connor Receives York Distinguished Service Award

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GAINESVILLE, Fla. — Larry Connor, former dean of the University of Florida’s College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, has been given the E.T. York Distinguished Service Award, to honor his contributions to the state’s agricultural and natural resources industries.

Connor received the award Thursday, Nov. 20 at Emerson Hall, during an IFAS unit leaders’ meeting. His name will be added to the plaque commemorating all recipients of the award. Past recipients are E.T. York, Ken Tefertiller, Jim Davidson and John Woeste.

“I’m delighted to see the York award presented to Dr. Connor, who was a very significant figure in the history of UF’s Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, and also very significant in my own career,” said Jimmy Cheek, UF senior vice president for agriculture and natural resources.

“I was an assistant dean under Dr. Connor, and when I succeeded him as dean of the college, the experience and the example he provided were extremely valuable assets,” Cheek said. “I owe much of my success as an administrator to him.”

Before the ceremony, Connor said, “I am honored and humbled to receive this prestigious award, which is named after one of our great leaders in agricultural higher education.”

Connor was head of the agriculture college from fall 1991 to January 1999, when he retired. During his tenure, enrollment nearly doubled, from about 2,000 students in fall 1991 to almost 3,900 in spring 1998. At his retirement, it was the sixth largest agriculture college in the country.

The college expanded in other ways, with the establishment of distance-education programs in West and South Florida, the launching of college honors programs and the opening of multimedia laboratories.
Connor was also unique in his use of more than 20 faculty task forces in bringing about transformational change in the college.

He came to UF from Michigan State University, where he had been a member of the agricultural economics department faculty since 1966. At MSU he had worked his way from assistant professor to professor, and had served for a time as department chairman and also assistant director for planning for the state agricultural experiment station.

Prior to joining the MSU faculty, Connor was an agricultural economist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Economic Research Service from 1964 to 1966.

He earned a bachelor’s degree in agricultural economics from the University of Nebraska in 1956 and then master’s and doctoral degrees in agricultural economics from Oklahoma State University in 1960 and 1964, respectively.

Connor has received numerous professional honors, including the Distinguished Educator Award from the National Association of Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture, the Gamma Sigma Delta Distinguished Service Award at UF, and the Alpha Zeta Faculty Special Recognition Award at MSU. He is also a member of many honorary and professional societies.

He has authored more than 160 professional publications and papers, including one book and chapters in several other books.

Connor and his wife, Dee Ann, live in Gainesville and have two children.

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