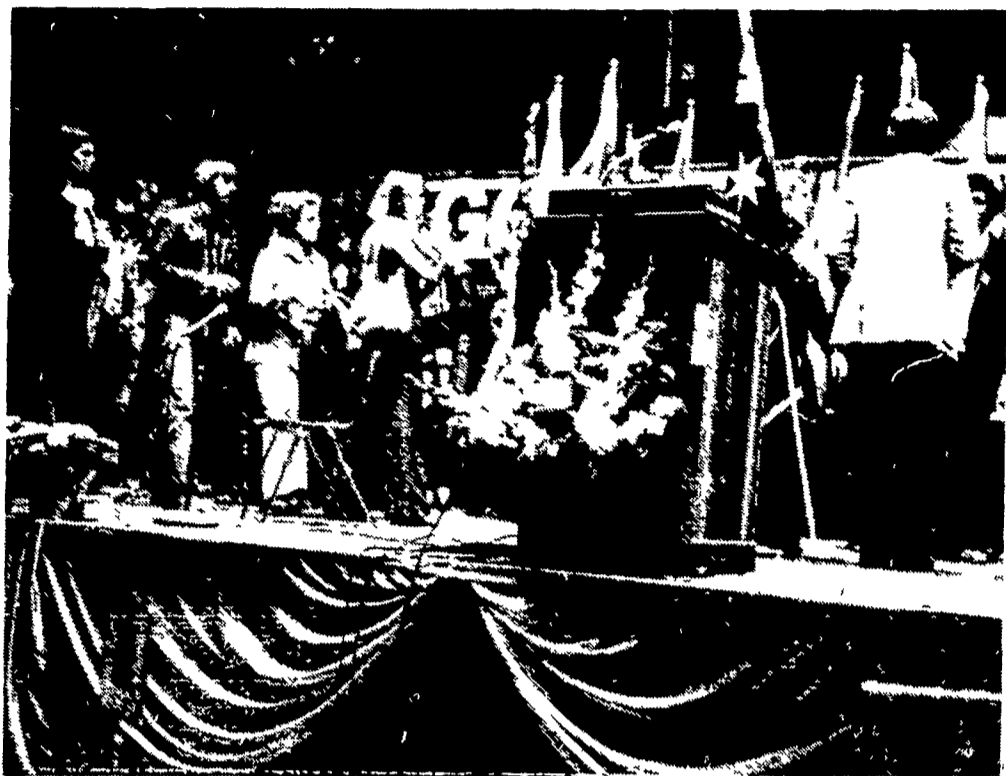


# Golden Anniversary FFA conv



Pageantry -- colors, flags, music, speeches, and an atmosphere of fun with dignity -- dominated the Golden Anniversary activities of the National FFA's 50th convention in Kansas City last week.

KANSAS CITY, Mo. - FFA members from across the nation braved cold temperatures in Kansas City to participate in the organization's 50th Anniversary Convention and join in the kickoff celebration for the Organization's year-long golden anniversary celebration. More than 22,000 FFA members, advisors, parents, and guests filled hotels within a 40-mile radius of here. Closed circuit television was installed to handle overflow crowds in Kansas City's Municipal Auditorium.

The record crowd heard addresses by well-known speakers that included Ohio State Head Football Coach W.W. "Woody" Hayes, North Carolina Governor James Hunt Jr. and humorist Grady Nutt. A greatly expanded career exposition featuring exhibits portraying career opportunities in agriculture drew record numbers of interested FFA members to the Exhibition Hall. Several special activities on the convention floor helped call attention to the opening of the organization's 50th Anniversary.

National FFA President James Bode of Geary, Okla. officially called the convention to order on the morning of Nov. 9. Members of the National FFA Band and Chorus joined in an audio visual presentation on the FFA theme, "FFA - A Golden Past - A Brighter Future," which set the stage for the three days of convention activities. Keynoting the opening session, Coach W.W. "Woody" Hayes gave the audience his views of discipline and motivation, saying, "First, you have to get their attention, then show them immediate improvement." Comparing his coaching methods to the Bible's disciples he said, "the ones who believe in you, believe in your teachings."

The 50th Anniversary medallion designed by FFA member Patti Yanz of Washington and the 50th Anniversary FFA flag were

unveiled during the session, and convention participants were welcomed to Kansas City by Mayor Charles Wheeler.

Keynoting the Wednesday afternoon session was Grady Nutt, the "Prime Minister of Humor" from Louisville, Ky. Illustrating his talk with many humorous stories, Nutt challenged FFA members to meet their job "head-on". He said that he was aware it was not an easy task, and urged that they strive to do their best at whatever agricultural career they chose to pursue.

The afternoon session saw the presentation of some of the over 2500 awards presented at the convention. National Chapter Safety Awards recognizing chapters for participation in safety projects in their local community were presented to 106 FFA chapters. The sponsors are the Farm and Industrial Equipment Institute (FIEI) and Dow Chemical U.S.A.

Always a highlight of the convention, Wednesday evening's National Public Speaking Contest drew a capacity crowd to the auditorium to hear 18-year-old Dee James of Clay Center, Kans., deliver his winning speech, "Agriculture's New Generation." Competing against three other regional finalists, James emphasized the importance of vocational agriculture and FFA programs in our society today. "I firmly believe in the role of the Future Farmers of America," he said, noting that vocational agriculture training helps supply the manpower and leadership that "will stand solid for our part in that inspiring task."

During the evening session, six dedicated leaders received the FFA's VIP Citation for their many years of continuous service to the National FFA Organization. Charles Dana Bennett, Harold Garver, Wm. Paul Gray, Ralph Howard, Clifton B. Jeter and George Shepherd were presented citations. In

another presentation Distinguished Service Citations for many years of service to FFA and vocational agriculture were awarded to the Extension Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Production Credit Associations of the United States, and Venard Films.

In a highlight of the evening's program, convention participants witnessed the premiere showing of a new FFA history film "Learning and the Land - 50 Years of FFA," sponsored by Firestone. Twenty-nine

Charter FFA members, who joined FFA between 1928 and 1930, were introduced to the convention audience. They were brought to the convention by the FFA Alumni Association, which hosted them at a breakfast in their honor on Thursday morning.

Thursday morning's program featured presentation of regional and national FFA Agricultural Proficiency Awards for outstanding achievement in 19 areas of production agriculture and agribusiness. Panels of judges representing education, business, and industry selected the national winners.

At the Thursday morning session, participants saw the National Citation, the highest award in the FFA community development program, Building Our American Communities (BOAC), presented the North Fayette County FFA Chapter of West Union, Iowa. The 136-member FFA chapter developed a highly successful all-purpose community building for the county fairgrounds. The award was signed and presented by Senator Richard Lugar of Ind., who served as Chairman of the National BOAC Selection Committee. BOAC awards are sponsored by Lilly Endowment, Inc., of Indianapolis, Ind.

At the afternoon session, FFA members listened as Ray Wilkinson, Capitol Broadcasting Company's Farm Relations Director of Raleigh, N.C. combined humor with a serious

message about the future of American Agriculture. "The future is bright for American Agriculture," Wilkinson told his audience of American Farmer Degree recipients emphasizing that "The best is yet to come."

Honorary American Farmer Degrees were conferred on 191 men and women who have served and supported the FFA. The American Farmer Degree, highest degree of membership in the FFA, was presented to 801 FFA members this year. It was the largest number of FFA members ever to receive the degree. From this select group judges named Dwight Buller, a 22-year-old crop farmer from Hendricks, Minnesota, Star Farmer of America, and another Minnesotan Michael Deming, 21, a materials handling equipment dealer from Owatonna, Star Agribusinessman of America. The Star Farmer and Star Agribusinessman of America awards are recognized as the nation's top awards for young men and women becoming established in farming and agribusiness careers. The awards were presented by the National FFA Foundation, Inc., following the premiere showing of the CIBA-GEIGY Corporation sponsored "Stars Over America" film documenting the achievements of the eight regional stars.


National FFA Foundations Sponsors were also recognized for their support in 1977. The 1977 Sponsoring


Committee Chairman, David A. Phillipson, DVM, vice president and general manager of The Upjohn Company of Kalamazoo, Mich., announced that 1977 was a record year for the Foundation which provided nearly \$900,000 for FFA incentive award programs. Clarke A. Nelson, group vice president, Carnation Company, Los Angeles, Calif., was introduced as the 1977 Sponsoring Committee Chairman. Expressing appreciation to Dr. Phillipson for outstanding leadership in promoting the National FFA Foundation,

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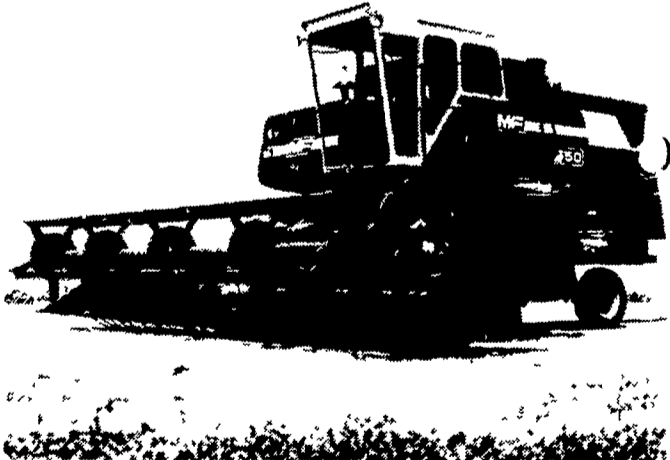


A "Golden Past and a Brighter Future" was the theme of the year's FFA convention in Kansas City, and 20,000 students participated.


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