

USDA honors two Md. SCS employees

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — Two Maryland employees of the Soil Conservation Service were honored May 18 at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's 37th annual awards program in Washington, D.C.

Edgar (Tinker) L. Todd, Jr., civil engineering technician at Denton, and Owen C. Unangst, district conservatist at Frederick, received the superior service award, the department's second highest. They will be among the 65 individuals and 19 groups to be honored.

"Nationally, there are only nine SCS employees among those receiving individual awards so we're particularly proud to have two from Maryland," says Gerald R. Calhoun, SCS state conservatist. "Both Tinker and Owen have made outstanding contributions to the soil and water conservation program in Maryland. We're happy that they are being recognized in a national awards program."

Todd, 47, and a native of Caroline County, is being honored for an outstanding career, especially for his leadership in organizing public drainage associations (PDAs).

PDAs are legal units composed of landowners who agree to tax themselves to construct and maintain drainage ditches. Organizing a PDA is not easy, says Jeff Loser, area conservatist. "Tinker is an authority on the state's public drainage association law. He's extremely successful in organizing PDAs because people know and trust him. It can be a delicate job because even though the drainage is needed, you're asking people to tax themselves."

There are 70 PDAs in Caroline County covering 320 miles of dit-

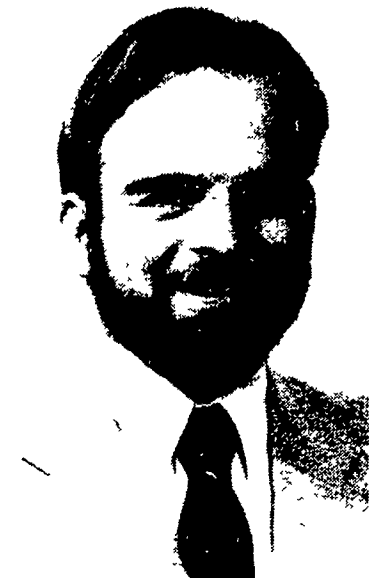


Edgar L. Todd Jr.

ches. In the past 3 years, Todd has been directly responsible for organizing 14 of those PDAs covering 130 miles. He's been involved, however, with virtually all of the PDAs, says Loser.

One advantage Todd has is that he is well known in the county not only for his SCS work but for his community activities. He's logged in 26 years as a Little League player agent, coach, and umpire. He's helped organize county basketball, baseball, softball, and volleyball leagues. He's even developed two ball parks for the town of Federalsburg and designed and built two dugouts and a backstop at the Denton Lions Club ball field.

When he's not working with public drainage associations, Todd provides technical assistance to farmers and landowners in seven counties. He and his wife Jean live



Owen C. Unangst

in Denton, Md. They have three children.

Unangst, 29, was singled out for recognition for making the most of limited financial resources — both the farmer's and the agency's, according to Calhoun.

When more farmers were worried about losing their mortgage than about losing their soil, Unangst started a campaign to promote low-cost conservation practices. He helped the conservation districts hold a field day demonstration of low-cost conservation practices. For example, they showed that diversions, which cost about \$2/ft. for a contractor to install, cost only 25 cents/ft. for a farmer to plow in with his own equipment. The amount of diversions alone built in Frederick County increased from 1,800 feet in 1981 to 11,000 feet in 1982.

Unangst was also responsible for

helping the Frederick and Catoctin districts secure a computer terminal. Unangst enrolled in two computer courses at the community college at night. Since he was the first district office in the state to get a computer, he has done much of the pioneer work in writing computer programs for routine design calculations and administrative functions.

Calculations that could take an hour to do manually can be done in 5 minutes on the computer. This

has freed up staff to do more one-on-one work with landowners.

Unangst grew up on a dairy farm in Abington. He was graduated with a B.S. degree in forest science from Penn State in 1976. He started his career with SCS as a student trainee in 1975 and served at a number of locations in Maryland before being appointed to his present position in 1980.

He and his wife, Margaret, live in Mt. Airy, Md.

NFO wins court suit

CORNING, Ia. — "This represents a final and total victory for the Natinal Farmers Organization," commented NFO President DeVon Woodland, following announcement that the United States Supreme Court refused to reverse the decision by the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals.

All that is left now is for the Federal District Court in Kansas City to determine the amount of damages to be recovered by NFO.

The claim which started the multi-million dollar lawsuit brought by Mid-America Dairymen, Inc. against NFO, as well as the suit later brought by Associated Milk Producers, Inc. (AMPI) against NFO were dismissed by the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals. The court at the same time upheld NFO's countersuit against those cooperatives.

The appeals court ruled that NFO did not violate the antitrust laws, but said the three dairy

organizations did violate those laws and conspired to monopolize milk sales during the late 1960s and early 1970s. The three are Mid-American Dairymen, Inc., Associated Milk Producers, Inc., (AMPI) and Central Milk Producers Co-op.

The Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals awarded \$164,000 to NFO to cover its costs in appealing the decision of the federal district court in Kansas City.

Woodland noted that the decade-long suit has been a substantial financial burden for the organization over the years and NFO had made numerous attempts to settle the suit before and during trial.

Woodland stated, "Our members have donated time and time again simply because we knew we were right and that justice would prevail even in the face of disappointments along the way. We are delighted with the decision of the U.S. Supreme Court."



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