

# Farm-City Banquet Highlights Exchangees, Agricultural Honorees

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growing up and processing meats the old-fashioned way.

On the tour, "The aroma was so satisfying and it made us so hungry," Fisher said.

Fisher said the complex of modern buildings at Hatfield was kept well, and the buildings are so "neat and handsome."

The Hatfield processing business was begun in 1895 by John C. Clemens. Fisher related the history of the operation through

the past century and described some products made by the company.

Fisher said 50 percent of the hogs processed by Hatfield are Pennsylvania pigs. Others come from New York state, Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, Illinois, Ohio, and Iowa.

Hilda Fisher, born and raised on a fruit farm in Rockland Township, graduated from Oley High School and Kutztown Col-

lege. An elementary teacher for 20 years, Fisher taught at Neff's School in Maxatawny Township, Links School in Oley, and in the Boyertown School District.

Hilda's husband Frank Fisher, born and raised on a farm in Oley Township, is a graduate of Oley High School. He has been a farmer since 1937.

After beginning as farmers in Robesonia, Frank and Hilda moved to the present Fisher farm in 1945, the sixth generation of Fishers to own the homestead. Frank has worked on many community projects.

The farm, permanently preserved through the county's agricultural land easement program, has grown agronomic crops, potatoes, and raised swine and steers.

Hilda and Frank, married in 1942, have three children — Steve, Gery, and Eloise.

Steve Clemens, who visited the Fisher residence, spoke about the Fisher Century Farm, established in 1790.

Clemens provided a detailed description of the houses and buildings on the Fisher homestead and their historical significance.

Clemens, born in Lansdale and raised in Hatfield, is a graduate of North Penn High School.

Clemens began his career in 1979 at Hatfield as a road driver

hauling swine and delivering pork products. After a decade, Clemens became supervisor of livestock delivery and then supervisor of scheduling and transportation.

After eight years in that responsibility, Clemens is in a three-year leadership, education, assessment, and development program. The program allows Clemens to experience each department within Hatfield Quality Meats.

Clemens is the youngest of five children and is married to Patricia MacCord. They have five children between the ages of 3-16: Steven, Morgan, Dana, Brian, and Cassidy.

## Honorees

Included in those honored during the banquet was *Lancaster Farming* Newspaper, which received a Public Relations In Agriculture Award.

The newspaper has been published every Saturday for more than 45 years. Bill Hughes, vice president of agrifinance with First Union National Bank, presented the honor to staff writers Andy Andrews and Lou Ann Good.

Hughes also honored another recipient with the award, Edward G. Hartman. Hartman has led the Berks County Farm Bureau as president from

1988-1998.

A farmer all his life in Spring, Bern, and Muhlenberg townships, Ed, with wife Josephine, have passed the farming operation on to their sons (the fifth generation of Hartmans farming near Reading).

Hughes honored Hartman for his dedication.

"This gentleman has dedicated his life to agriculture and has been an excellent spokesperson for Berks farmers and farm families," said Hughes.

Hartman has served as chairman of the Farm Bureau state political action committee and on the state commodities and local affairs committees.

The 2000 Tressie S. Caton Woman in Agriculture Award was presented to Hilda Fisher, who was also a Farm-City exchangee.

Fisher's whole life has been spent in promoting agriculture and historical preservation, according to the council.

Fisher was active in many areas, including helping to ensure that Oley Township was the first to be registered in the U.S. as a historical place; local promoter and supporter of long-term efforts to have Oley Township develop an effective ag preservation zone; and is known locally as the "Oley Valley historian."



Lancaster Farming was honored with a Public Relations in Agriculture Award at the Berks County Farm-City Banquet. From left, presenting the award is Ernest Heckman, president of the Farm-City Council to Lou Ann Good and Andy Andrews, Lancaster Farming staff writers.



Edward G. Hartman, Berks County Farm Bureau, right, was honored with a Public Relations in Agriculture Award. Bill Hughes, vice president of agrifinance for First Union Bank, presented the honor.



Farm-City exchangee family at the Berks County Farm-City banquet. Seated, in front, are Frank and Hilda Fisher, Oley. Back, from left, Kirk Fisher, Felicia Fisher, Margie Fisher, Steve Fisher, Eloise Fisher, Gery Fisher, and Carol Fisher.

## Marino, Stecher, Hoffman Honored By Gloucester Ag Board

CLAYTON, N.J. — Russell Marino, mayor of South Harrison Township and Al Stecher, former mayor of Woolwich Township, were presented with Distinguished Service to Agriculture awards at the recent annual dinner-dance and business meeting of the Gloucester County Board of Agriculture (GCBA) in Glassboro, N.J.

Joe Hoffman, former Gloucester County clerk, was also presented with the Special Service to Agriculture Award.

Russell J. Marino, senior partner and president of Sun Valley Orchards, was recognized and presented a plaque by Doug Zee, past president of the GCBA.

The Marino family farms 1,200-acres of peaches, vegetables, and field crops in South Harrison Township, where Marino has been mayor for the past 14 years.

"The Marino's are one of the leaders in modern growing and packing technology," said Zee. "With a state-of-the-art packing and storage facility, they have now integrated their business into trucking and wholesaling."

Marino was also recognized for his service to county and state agriculture and to his community. He is one of three growers from Gloucester County that sit on the state board of agriculture.

He was recognized for his past service as a director on the New Jersey Farm Bureau, the Gloucester County Board of Agriculture, The New Jersey Tomato Council, The New Jersey Peach Council, The Swedesboro Auction, Pioneer Farm Credit Association, and the Woodstown Agway. Zee also recognized his service as mayor and deputy mayor in South Harrison Township and his membership on the South Harrison Township Plan-

ning Commission, the township environmental commission, and his term as a trustee of the South Harrison Township Educational Alliance.

"Russell has also been president of the Gloucester County Mayors Association," said Zee.

Stecher's plaque and citation were presented by Michelle Infante-Casella, agricultural agent with Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Gloucester County. The Stecher family owns Stecher's County Store and Farm in Woolwich Township.

Stecher was cited for his innovative marketing methods and the development of his upscale store in the western edge of Gloucester County.

He was also recognized for the production of melons that are niche-marketed in the eastern U.S. Infante-Casella emphasized the personal service of Stecher and his family, in recognizing

their many contributions. The Stechers were also recognized for their Christmas season marketing.

"During the Christmas season, shoppers can find hundreds of different ornaments, wreaths, flower arrangements, candles, and other gifts after picking out their fresh tree," said Infante-Casella.

Stecher was also recognized for his past service as a director of the Gloucester County Board of Agriculture, the New Jersey Farm Bureau, and as a member of the American Farm Bureau.

"Al Stecher has been a special person in his community," said Infante-Casella. "He was Woolwich Township mayor for 13 years, and since 1988, he has been chairman of the Woolwich Township Planning Commission," stated Infante-Casella. Stecher was also recognized for his service on the Gloucester

County Solid Waste Commission and as building inspector, zoning inspector, and a police officer in Woolwich Township.

George Dean, vice president of the GCBA, presented a special award to Joe Hoffman, former Gloucester County clerk for 36 years. "Joe Hoffman's roots go back to 1923 with his birth on the family farm," said Dean.

"At age 29, a tragic hunting accident almost ended his life and three years later, he left farming," stated Dean.

Joe Hoffman was recognized for his accomplishments as a banker with Newfield Bank and his long service to 4-H Youth Development in the county, in addition to his impartial work as the Gloucester County clerk. Hoffman was also cited for his work as past Chairman of United Way, as a trustee of Underwood Memorial Hospital and chair of their building drive.