

History of Kentucky 4-H Foundation

The Beginning

Kentucky Cooperative Extension is funded by local, state and federal appropriations, but few of these funds have been available for awards, teaching resources, volunteer training, and event expenses. In 1973, Conrad Feltner, State 4-H Leader, began to contact alumni and business people across the state sharing the need for an entity which could accept and handle private contributions and a group of people willing to assist in raising these funds.

That idea became a reality on October 18, 1973, when eleven business people joined Mr. Feltner at the Jefferson Club in Louisville for what would become the formation of Friends of Kentucky 4-H, Inc. State 4-H Association President (known today as Kentucky 4-H President) Tommy Cole, a teen from Warren County, gave a speech on 4-H.

The eleven business people in attendance were:

- Barry Bingham, Sr., Courier-Journal Times
- Maurice Denton, Federal Land Bank of Louisville
- J.T. Underwood, Jr., Kentucky LP Gas Association
- Bob Miller, Kentucky Rural Electric Co-op
- Thomas Farr, Louisville Bank of Cooperatives
- Ray Huddleston, Lily Mills
- Wendell Howard, Kentucky Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance
- Charlotte Tharp, WHAS Television
- John Henderson, Southern States Cooperatives
- Terry Trovato, Standard Oil
- Jodie George, Standard Oil

During that meeting, things began to happen. Officers were elected--Jodie George, President; Robert Miller, Vice president; and Lynwood Schrader (Kentucky Utilities), Secretary. President George was empowered to appoint a treasurer. John Henderson was appointed treasurer on November 6, 1973.

Official Documents Prepared

The members contacted Julia Kurtz, a 4-H alumna who had recently graduated from law school, to draw up the Articles of Incorporation. (Julia became Judge Julia K. Tackett) Articles of Incorporation were filed with the Secretary of State in March 1974 and a Certificate of Incorporation was issued by Secretary Thelma Stovall. The articles were filed with the Fayette County Clerk's office. Bylaws

were presented to the directors on March 19, 1974, and were unanimously adopted.

Friends of Kentucky 4-H, Inc. was organized as a non-profit, charitable corporation. The membership was composed of representatives of companies, corporations, and individuals who contributed funds and time on a recurring basis for state 4-H programs.

The purposes of the organization include:

- To assist in the promotion and expansion of the 4-H program to include greater numbers of Kentucky youth.
- To assist 4-H by providing financial support for present and new educational programs for 4-H youth.
- To serve as a depository for funds contributed by members of Friends of Kentucky 4-H, Inc., and others in the furtherance of the Kentucky 4-H program.

First Major Funding Campaign

Construction of the Kentucky Leadership Center became the first major fund-raising effort for Friends. Numerous proposals were submitted to a variety of funding sources. The projected cost was \$3.5 million. Counties were asked to raise \$681,000 and the suggestion made that the goal could be reached by raising \$3 per member. **More . . . [Link to history of KY Leadership Center](#)**

Area Fund Raisers

During the construction of the center, practically all state fund-raising efforts were directed toward that project. To jump start fund raising for the general 4-H program, suggested that each Friends director, host some type of area fundraiser. Areas used different ideas—dinners, golf scrambles, special events, etc.

Roy Strange, Director for Louisville, related the story of how he started a golf scramble which eventually came to bear his name. While driving home from the board meeting, Strange reasoned to himself--he didn't know a lot about raising money but he was committed to 4-H and he wanted to do something. He liked to play golf so he decided to pitch the idea of a golf scramble to his business associates and friends. The first person he called liked the idea and agreed to play so he called another and another. It was so successful, the Louisville area has continued the scramble annually.

Change from Member to Non-Member Organization

The original organization was formed as a “member” organization--anyone who made a contribution through Friends was considered a “member”. An annual meeting of the members was held once a year, with general operating decisions handled by the board of directors.

As the organization evolved, changes were needed. On July 24, 1998, board member Allen Montgomery presented changes to the bylaws which would transition Friends from a member organization to a non-member organization. In a summary of the changes presented that day, Montgomery explained, The Kentucky nonprofit corporation statute allows, but does not require that an organization have members. Many nonprofit corporations do not have members. That means that final authority and responsibility for the organization rests with the board of directors. Friends has members who are persons who give money to the work of the 4-H program and have the right to approve changes the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. This provision was part of the original governance documents adopted in 1974 when Friends was a very different organization. As a result of evolution of the Friends organization and having a more clearly defined strategic role in the overall 4-H program it is recommended that the Friends board have the final responsibility for all decisions effecting the organization. As a result, it is recommended that the membership section be deleted.”

After hearing proposed changes to the bylaws, Addie Ferreday, volunteer leader from Louisville, made a motion to transition from a member organization to a non-member organization.

Largest Single Contribution

The largest single contribution occurred in 2002. The Kentucky Agriculture Development Board awarded \$2 million from Tobacco Settlement Funds to Friends. The money established an endowment. Income from the invested funds would fund Venture grants within the Kentucky 4-H program. Assistance from numerous helped make the dream a reality. The idea was that a \$2 million investment would likely produce about \$100,000 annually to fund creative ideas taking 4-H into areas into which it had never ventured before.

Finish this one

Fund Raising Events

In 2006, a black tie dinner/fundraiser was held in Lexington honoring 4-H Alumnus Orlando “Tubby” Smith, University of Kentucky Basketball Coach, for his work with and on behalf of youth. Smith was a 4-H'er in Maryland.

Singer/songwriter Linda Davis, who won a Grammy with country superstar Reba McEntire provided musical entertainment. The Pike County Performing Arts Show Choir also performed.

In 2007, the foundation hosted a fund raiser at the Northern Kentucky Convention Center with popular restaurateur, author and television personality Paula Deen in Covington. To select three members to serve as Deen's demonstration assistants, 4-H'ers across the state were invited to audition by submitting a video of himself or herself giving a demonstration and telling why he/she wanted to be chosen. The three chosen were:

- 1) Rachel Young, 10, Nelson Co.—Rachel had completed projects in cooking, photography, and sewing. She was already a big Deen fan and looked forward to meeting her at the event.
- 2) Sarah Myers, 17, of Campbell Co.—Sarah was State 4-H Bread Demonstration Champion, National 4-H Congress delegate and had been actively involved in the horse project.
- 3) Jonathan Carman, 18, Jessamine Co.—Jonathan was KY 4-H State Vice President, was delegate to National 4-H Congress and National 4-H Conference and had served on the planning committee for Issues Conference. He was active in numerous projects throughout his 4-H career.

First Executive Director Hired

For many years, a member of the Kentucky 4-H State Staff worked with the Friends Board of Directors while shouldering other responsibilities for the 4-H program. In 2004, with assets over \$3 million, the board made the decision to hire its first full time executive director. Chris Clabes was hired in April 2005.

Name Changed to Kentucky 4-H Foundation

During a Board retreat, Jay Hellmann, Chairman, made the comment during a brain-storming session that “foundation” should be in the Friends name so that people could more readily understand its role related to 4-H. That became a reality in 2008 when appropriate documents were submitted to the Secretary of State. The Board opted for the name “Kentucky 4-H Foundation.”