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Words and Deeds earn Knock family "FFA Family of the Year" Award

BROOKINGS (April 10, 2016) - The SD FFA Foundation named the annual “FFA Family of the Year” award, honoring a family's long term involvement in the SD FFA/Agriculture Education program. The 2015 recipient of this award is the **Wally & Kathy Knock family**, including Wally and Kathy along with their children and their spouses Eric & Roxanne, Jared & Kati, Ashley & Tony, and Jennifer & Joe as well as future FFA members Rylee, RaeAnna, Rielle, Millie, Ansley, and Addy. The award was presented on April 10th, during the State FFA Convention in Brookings.

"The purpose of this award is to recognize a SD FFA family that has gone the extra-mile for the FFA at the local and state levels through their words and deeds. The actions of the entire Knock family through multiple generations have modeled the FFA mission ... developing premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agriculture education. We are glad we could recognize them with this special award," said Gerri Ann Eide, SD FFA Foundation Executive Director.

The Knocks have been very active at the chapter, state, and national levels of FFA. They put the phrase from the FFA Creed, *"a faith, born not of words but of deeds"* into action. Wally and Kathy own and operate a grain and livestock farm by Willow Lake. They have actively supported FFA for more than 40 years. As the parents of four past FFA members of the Willow Lake FFA chapter, and Wally a past Willow Lake FFA member himself, their association with the blue corduroy jackets spans decades. Wally and Kathy are both active supporters of their local FFA chapter and actively support each project, class and activity offered. The Knocks frequently help judge state proficiencies & star awards, provide an extra hand at the State Fair, and hand out awards at convention. Several volunteered numerous years assisting with State Convention preparation and execution, coaching students, and never said no when asked to tackle a task. Jared currently serves as the State Chairman for the Jr. Parliamentary Procedure career development event (CDE,) Roxanne serves as the State Chairman for the Public Speaking Career Development event, and Eric and Kati serve as judges for various areas. Jared & Kati employ a high school FFA member during the summer, which serves as the student's SAE project and has been an excellent influence in teaching this student aspect of agriculture that he otherwise wouldn't be exposed to. Kati has recently stepped up to serve on the FFA State Fair building planning committee. They are all verbal advocates for agriculture education/FFA and all it can do for young people. They never miss an opportunity to share with others how their lives have been positively influenced by Agriculture Education and FFA. The Knock family has sponsored state career development events and supported and provided for other needs of the SD FFA Foundation, in addition to encouraging others to step up with funds when needed.

Willow Lake FFA advisor, Dan Tonak, says, "The Knocks are a family that every FFA Chapter wishes for as far as a family support system. They have given 100% of themselves physically,

mentally and emotionally to the FFA organization throughout the years. Early on Wally & Kathy instilled an interest in their four children to excel in the FFA. The whole family was instrumental in the ongoing success of the Willow Lake FFA chapter over a span of fifteen years due to their dedication & hard work. Their passion for helping the younger generation believe in the future of agriculture is boundless. I am blessed to have their support and leadership within our local FFA chapter as well as to call them my friends!" Wally, Eric, Roxanne, Jared, Ashley and Jennifer were all active local members, applied for proficiencies, served as chapter officers, and all went on to earn the State and American FFA Degrees. Five family members participated on a state winning CDE team, advancing to the national level as high school students. In addition they had Star Finalist projects, six served as district officers, three as state officers, and one ran for National FFA office. Each put their heart into influencing and inspiring other young people through their opportunity to serve the FFA organization. More important than any titles they held are the examples of leadership they set, serving as role models for students in the organization.

"During our experiences in the FFA, we developed lifelong friendships, cultivated pertinent and valuable skill sets, refined our leadership and speaking abilities, and were offered a chance to serve something greater than ourselves. It was an enormously positive and rewarding experience that I am thankful for to this day," says Jared Knock. Family members continue to promote FFA through their actions, participating in chapter and state activities, and supporting others who are involved. They always take time to listen and find ways to answer a question, help with a project, or fill out an application. Each member of the Knock family is a role model that everyone can look up to, and they inspire younger FFA members to become more active.

The Knocks not only give their time to the FFA – they give it to several other local and state organizations. Wally served on the Willow Lake school board many years, several as president, and his support for the ag program/FFA chapter during that time was unwavering. He is currently on the Board of Directors for South Dakota Wheatgrowers, Dakotaland Feeds, South Dakota Value Added, and active with the National Association of Farm Co-ops. Kathy has served on the Rosedale Township board and local church board. Wally, Kathy, Eric, Roxanne, Jared, Kati, Ashley, Tony, Jennifer, and Joe all work in the agricultural industry or rural services sector, and all actively seek ways to help educate and support Agriculture Education and FFA chapters through their careers.

The SD FFA Foundation presented each Knock family group with an "FFA Family of the Year" photo frame and thank you for their tremendous impact on agriculture education and FFA in SD. The FFA Family of the year award is sponsored by the SD FFA Foundation.

The National FFA Organization provides leadership, personal growth and career success training through agricultural education to 610,240 FFA members, aged 12–21, in 7,665 chapters in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

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About National FFA Organization

The National FFA Organization is a national youth organization with 4,100 South Dakota members as

part of 81 local FFA chapters in SD school districts. The FFA mission is to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education. For more, visit the South Dakota FFA Foundation at: <http://www.sdffaoundation.org/>.

Photo Caption: The Wally & Kathy family receive the FFA Family of the Year award April 10, during the State FFA Convention in Brookings.