

January 17, 2013

Gerry Ann Eide
South Dakota FFA Foundation, Inc.
39393 133rd Street
Bath, South Dakota 57427

Re: Jan. 2013 "Investment in the Future"

Dear Friends,

This is a late response to your January 2013 invite regarding "the value of an FFA advisor". I have misplaced the "Contribution Card" hence will substitute this comment sheet:

Ernest Christensen our Vocational Ag instructor at Webster High School in the 1940's and 1950's, a gentleman educator of 'exceptional' ambition, effectiveness as a teacher, Knowledge of an extremely broad curriculum, devotion toward effectiveness and personal sacrifice for effective learning by students during the school year and on student projects during summer.

Mr. Christensen taught all 4 grades of High School Ag; supervised the FFA organization, and instituted a multitude of above and beyond learning events, activities, and subjects for vocational ag students, FFA activities, and events within the community. He was an outstanding person with above norm dedication, leadership, intelligence, in an extremely comprehensive manner in the classroom and in FFA activities, and in the total life community for many years.

Some of the subjects taught very effectively by Mr. Christensen are listed below. Those educational subjects were expanded upon through various "FFA" support activities.

The many normal Voc Ag subjects up to a "graduate student level".

We as students butchered and prepared meat. We learned extemporaneous speaking, practiced telling stories without incorrect reference or words.

Farm building design and site layout relative to trees etc.

We rented land (40 + acres) bought a new WD45 A.C. tractor and some old equipment and farmed as a 'task of FFA'. That work evolved through 3 sites in cooperative coordination with community changes.

Each year we dug a pit, wrapped meat, burned wood branches and hosted parents and townspeople as a thank you from FFA students. This annual event evolved to a level of fame with increased attendance looking forward to the "Barbequed Beef".

He inspected our personal projects and visited our project locations in the summer months.

Took students via bus to meat plants such as Morrells in Sioux Falls.

Took students via bus to swimming places in Sioux Falls and Aberdeen.

Took Students via bus to FFA meetings, conventions, and judging competition.

Organized an FFA basketball team and league with uniforms, tournaments etc.

Prepared and trained students to participate in regional and statewide judging competition

Taught income tax preparation and a host of subjects beyond the normal curriculum.

We made "paint" from raw products.

We responded with participation in service projects in the community.

We participated as an FFA organization and as individuals in County Fair and State Fair events.

Mr. Christensen led some follow-up activities in FFA beyond the school year.

Mr. Christensen was an organist at a local church and encouraged student participation in musical and patriotic projects. We also prepared floats for various parades.

The preceding items are just a few of the many very worthwhile learning experiences that Mr. Christensen initiated, and extended guidance above and beyond the norm for student advancement. It would be possible

to interview hundreds of graduates and FFA participants from the 20+ years of Mr. Christensen's leadership in Webster. Several of his students went on to become outstanding Voc Ag educators as their career.

We as students utilized the knowledge that Mr. Christensen influenced us to do as we continued on in many fields. Many of us served in the US military went on with further education and have done a variety of careers. Our families have benefitted through the education and FFA participation that was established in a major proportion by our High School Future Farmers of America advisor. Many of us are now in the twilight years of life and still lean on some of our experiences and success because of the leadership by Mr. Christensen and our participation in the FFA. Many of us were officers and received awards at regional, state and national levels.

Yes our nomination of an outstanding leader of student's participation in the "Future Farmers of America" is: Mr. Ernest Christensen of Webster, South Dakota.

Thank You,


Lyle L. Berg
Class of 1950

Attached: Donation to FFA in honor of Ernest Christensen

PS Mr. Ernest Christensen died many years ago. His son "Mark Christensen" resides with his family on what was his parent's home and farm in the Webster community.

It would be possible for us to arrange a gathering with individuals living in the community in their retirements years who could provide testimony of their experiences in life that were significantly enabled as a result of their participation in FFA under the encouragement by their high school adviser, Mr. Ernest Christensen; his nickname "Christy" is certainly the recognized name of our high school faculty.