

Bill & Helen Hurst

One cannot be thinking about Suffolk Sheep and not remember the name Bill Hurst & Family from Greencastle, Indiana. A long time breeder of the original good heads, muscular bodies, and cleanfleeced animals that originated from the English flock with the ram, Ashbocking John Long.

Bill's life centered around the love and development of high quality Suffolks. As a young boy, with five older siblings, growing up on a family farm during the great depression, Bill's father emphasized the financial gains of raising sheep and working hard.

WWII came along and changed Bill's farming plans. Drafted and sent to the frigid landscape of Alaska, Bill's rugged childhood allowed him the ability to survive injuries while blasting an air force field for what would later be the theater for the bloodiest forgotten battle of the war, ATU. He missed the battle, lived ten years in severe pain, unable to open his fractured jaws, sent home by military doctors maimed for life, to his beloved farm, to spend his last days.

Bill made lemonade from his lemons. An avid reader and poet, Bill read about five ewes and a ram with clean faces and legs in Michigan. With his old Willy's Jeep and a two wheeled wagon, he drove there and purchased the first wool free black faced sheep to be seen in Indiana. About this time he reunited with his friend, recently returned from North Africa, army nurse Helen Hurst. Her father, Walker Reasor owned and showed Hampshire sheep with his son James. Soon an unscheduled elopement to Illinois caused rumors that Bill had for sure returned with a "EWE". Bill's love of sheep began early and the life lessons have truly been instilled in his family today.

Bill was the president of the local county fair and was soon making a name for his fine Suffolks, exhibiting at fairs in Indiana, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Missouri and Michigan. He sold sheep to Chile, Canada and, of course, many of the states. As secretary of the National Suffolk Sheep Association, he volunteered eight years attending meetings in Washington, DC and Chicago to promote the sheep industry. He participated in the Purdue and Michigan State ram weight of gain programs and assisted with state lamb pooling stations for market lambs. Judging sheep shows throughout Indiana, and even the Illinois open class, became a legacy for people who knew Bill.

Hosting sheep judging clinics for 4-H and FFA youth at his home, at local fairgrounds or presenting workshops at Purdue, became a way of life that spanned his 87 years. Bill and Helen were always teaching and sharing their skills and knowledge with young people.

He was awarded the Distinguished Service Award from the Indiana Sheep Association and was accepted into the Purdue University Hall of Fame for his conservation practices on the farm.

Being called a quiet man of strong faith, who loved to tell stories, he was called "one of the most respected sheep producers in the state and is a gem of a person, a man of integrity, a wonderful man, a wealth of information, and a good neighbor who will be deeply missed."

His life lessons have not yet ended. Bill & Helen's dedication to the farm and sheep industry, honesty, service to our country, and work ethic have been instilled into their children, grandchildren and now great grandchildren. Carolyn & Beverly are in professional occupations serving people, the great grandchildren all have college degrees, and now the great grandchildren (which happen to be 5 boys, 9 years old down

to 8mos.) are being introduced at an early age, to the caring and love of animals that Bill so truly loved. The 9 year old began his 4-H life this year and in the same arena where Bill showed and taught and made his way. BILL'S LIFE LIVES ON.....