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## Four Receive Honorary American Degree

**MATTHEW BRAKE**  
By FFA State Reporter

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — The American Degree is the highest degree the FFA can bestow upon its members. Less than 1 percent of all members receive their American Degree. The Honorary American Degree is a way for state associations to acknowledge individuals who have provided exceptional services to agriculture, agricultural education or FFA. This year, Pennsylvania FFA recognized four individuals with a Honorary American Degree at the Fourth General Session of the National FFA Convention on Friday, Oct. 31.

This year's recipients were Carole Fay, State Agriculture Deputy Secretary Jay Homas, Rep. Mark Keller and Sen. Elder Vogel Jr. All were nominated for their continued support of agriculture education and the FFA.

Carole Fay was an agriculture education teacher for 30 years, having recently retired from the Penn Manor School District. During her time as a teacher, she served as the FFA adviser at her school. She also was instrumental in building the program to a four-teacher department.

Fay served as a representative to the

Pennsylvania FFA Alumni Board, the Pennsylvania FFA Foundation Board and the Pennsylvania FFA Association Board of Directors. She served as the Pennsylvania Association of Agriculture Educators president elect, president and past president. She has been a mentor to several students who have entered the profession of agriculture education.

Fay has always been most helpful at the state level, helping to coordinate conventions, conferences, serving as mentors to state officers and helping to train new officers. Her contributions to agriculture education will be felt for years to come as some changes to policy in recent years have come from her suggestions. While retired, she has not stopped being involved and continues to help make a difference.

**James Howes**

James "Jay" Howes is the Pennsylvania deputy secretary for consumer protection, regulatory affairs and dairy industry relations. He is responsible for the Bureau of Food Safety and Laboratory Services, Bureau of Risk and Measurement Standards, Bureau of Plant Industry, and Bureau of Food Distribution.

Previous to his appointment, Howes was director of policy development

for the Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee at the Pennsylvania House of Representatives.

For more than 16 years, he focused on issues including: environmental regulation of production agriculture, dairy issues related to milk marketing, agriculture law and land use. His major responsibilities were to research and advise members on agriculture issues in the state, develop and enact agriculture legislative initiatives, as well as prepare comments on proposed regulations impacting agriculture, and monitor activities of various boards and agencies such as the Milk Marketing Board, DEP Agriculture Advisory Board and the State Conservation Commission.

Howes was the director of promotions at the Pennsylvania Holstein Association and was also owner and manager of a company merchandising dairy cattle and genetics domestically and internationally. Howes was also an owner and operator of a 100-head dairy farm.

Howes supports agriculture education and the FFA through his position and as an individual he is always promoting and supporting what we do and who we are.

**Mark Keller**  
Pennsylvania State Rep. Mark



Photos submitted by PA FFA Association

Sen. Elder Vogel, center, with the state FFA officer team after receiving his Honorary American Degree.

Keller, R-Landsburg, has been a champion for agriculture education and the FFA. Having grown up in agriculture and still residing in rural Pennsylvania, Keller knows first-hand the importance of the FFA.

Each year, Keller hosts a breakfast where FFA chapter members are invited. In addition, he always hosts the state officers during National FFA Week, when a state proclamation is read on the House floor and the officers are recognized. Keller also sees that the state officers visit with the governor and lieutenant governor each year.

His willingness to help at any time opens doors for agriculture education at the state level creating conversations with school districts that do not offer agriculture education/FFA. As a member of the House Agriculture Committee, a board member of the Friends of Farm Show Foundation and a board member of the Pennsylvania Farm Show Commission, agriculture education and FFA are always in his thoughts.

**Elder Vogel Jr.**  
Pennsylvania State Sen. Elder Vogel, R-New Sewickley Township, is

the FFA voice in the Pennsylvania Senate and willing to help and support FFA programs.

He is instrumental in proclaiming National FFA Week in Pennsylvania each year with a Senate proclamation and having the state officers recognized on the Senate floor. Vogel also helps secure visits with congressmen and senators in Washington during the State President's Conference and other times we visit our nation's capital.

Vogel advocates for the promotion of agriculture, agriculture education and the FFA with his colleagues in the state Senate. Vogel is chairman of the Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee, vice-chairman of the Senate Local Government Committee, and is a member of the Aging and Youth, Appropriations, Environmental Resources and Energy and Urban Affairs and Housing committees.

Vogel has also been instrumental in keeping and starting new agriculture education programs in his district and reaches across district lines to help other senators do the same. Due to his involvement, the association has been able to keep open programs and start new ones.



Pennsylvania FFA members after receiving their American Degrees.

## Two Pa. FFA Members Recognized in 'Stars Over America Pageant'

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Two Pennsylvania FFA members were recognized on stage at the National FFA Convention in Louisville, Ky., on Nov. 1.

Ruby Moon from the Greenwood FFA chapter was selected as a national finalist for her Supervised Agriculture Experience in diversified livestock production, and Katie Osborne from the Greenwood FFA chapter was selected as an American Star in Agriculture finalist.

Moon's project consisted of market lambs, goats and beef as well as breeding beef and goats. She started raising beef and goats through 4-H but continued to expand her operation to include livestock during the summer. After eighth-grade year. One of the goals she had with her SAE was to be able to sell only animals bred and owned by her, which she reached this year.

To be selected as a national finalist, Moon first had to be chosen as a state winner. After becoming a state winner at the Pennsylvania FFA State Convention in June, her application was sent to the National FFA. The National FFA then chooses four students in the area of diversified livestock production-entrepre-



Ruby Moon Katie Osborne

neurship to become a finalist at the national level.

"I was surprised and honored," Moon said. "I know that everyone competing worked just as hard, so for me to be selected was a great surprise."

Moon says that this SAE area has helped her develop her skills in sales, production and knowledge in caring for livestock. She hopes to build off of what she has learned through her SAE to become a large animal veterinarian.

In addition, Moon was chosen to be a participant in the Costa Rica Proficiency and Stars Travel Seminar. She will spend a week in Costa Rica developing her global perspective and knowledge while increasing her awareness of agriculture around the world.

Katie Osborne was selected as one of the four finalists out of more than 3,000 American Degree recipients to be a finalist of the American Star in Agriculture. Less than 1 percent of

all FFA members receive their American Degree. Osborne was chosen for her SAE involving research of mastitis in dairy cattle. Her work through the SAE has influenced her to perform four studies in dairy cattle and has allowed her to work with multiple university professors.

To become a candidate for the American Star, Osborne first had to apply for her American FFA Degree and be chosen by the state to be the Pennsylvania representative for the Star in Agriculture. After submitting applications to National FFA, she was then notified that she was selected as a finalist.

"When I first heard I was a finalist, I was excited, but I think Mr. (Michael) Clark and Mrs. (Krista) Pichler were most excited that I was," Osborne said. She is proud to represent the Greenwood FFA and the Pennsylvania FFA Association at the National Convention.

Once she arrived in Louisville for the National Convention, Osborne had an interview process similar to the Agriculture Proficiency finalist. She was then recognized on stage during the eighth session for becoming a finalist.

Osborne's research also inspired her study biology at Wake Forest University in hopes of continuing on to veterinary medicine school to become a research veterinarian.

## Reflections From Convention

FROM THE OFFICER'S STATION

It's hard to believe that National Convention is over. On the trip home, I could not help but reflect on all of the memories that I made with my fellow officers.

The days were a whirlwind of excitement and fun. Things kicked off with the officer team arriving ahead of the convention to begin the delegate program. In addition to the state officer team, three past state officers — Maranda Kane, Kayla Wallace and Dendra Bollinger — served as delegates for the Pennsylvania FFA. The additional delegates went in response to the association's membership growth. Each state association's delegate count is based on state membership.

Pennsylvania was also honored for this membership increase this year. The state was awarded for the second-highest percentage of membership growth nationally. The top award went to Texas FFA.

On Oct. 27, delegates volunteered their time during National Day of Service at Dean Food Bank. Delegates made food boxes for people in the surrounding counties. This year, 475 delegates and an estimated 64,000 FFA members and guests attended the National Convention, which opened on Oct. 29.

We enjoyed the heartfelt retiring addresses made by all the national officers and four keynote speakers over the nine sessions held throughout the four days. The first keynote speaker was Nick Vupick, a lamb-less man, that inspired everyone in attendance to do something rather than be idle with the life we were given and that everyone has value.

The second keynote speaker, Donnie Smith, CEO of Tyson Foods, called us to action on

feeding the world during the third session. The third keynote speaker, Jeff Simmons, president of Elanco, told the attendees his view on how we can feed the world by 2050 using his campaign slogan, Feed400.

The fourth and final keynote speaker that presented Friday night at the seventh general session was June Herlong, a former Miss America contestant and now a best-selling author. She inspired us to preserve and to be ourselves using parts from her book, "Don't Throw Tomatoes at My Field of Dreams."

The last session of the convention was dedicated to the national officers. The retiring officers played a video to thank you to their parents and families.

The session ended with new national officers being elected: Andy Paul of Georgia, national president; Victoria Malach of Arkansas, national secretary; Ruth Ann Myers of Kentucky, national region vice president; Caleb Gustin of New Mexico, western region vice president; Kristin Schmidt of Colorado, central region vice president; and Stephen McBride of Tennessee, southern region vice president. These officers will serve from now until the 2015 National Convention.

Pennsylvania's national officer candidate Shannon Copeland did an excellent job representing the Keystone State.

I am grateful for the opportunity to have attended this convention, to come home with a new perspective and new energy to complete the rest of my year.

*Editor's note: Lisa Boltz is the Pa. State FFA treasurer.*



LISA BOLTZ