

Brookley Rush Butcher

Brookley Rush Butcher, one of nine children of George W. and Alberta D. Butcher, was born on May 8, 1923, in Belfont, Braxton County, West Virginia. He was educated in the local schools, graduating from Sutton High School in 1943. He soon enrolled in Berea College, Berea, Kentucky, but in May, 1944, he was drafted and sent to Fort Lee, Virginia, for indoctrination and later to Fort Ord, California, for technical training. He spent most of his service time in the Philippines and Japan, returning home in June, 1946.

He returned to Berea College in 1947, teaching folk dancing to girl's physical education classes for his fees. He graduated in 1951 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture.

Upon graduation, he joined the West Virginia University Extension Service as the county agent in Boone County. After three years of constantly expanding programs, he left to become a youth education advisor with the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources and a year later he moved to Nicholas County as extension agent, a position he held until retiring on March 1, 1980.

Mr. Butcher is widely known for developing the nation's first "Opportunity Camps" for disadvantaged children; his 22 years as supervisor with the Elk Conservation District, including several terms as vice-chairman; his exemplary service in the West Virginia Association of Conservation Districts, including serving as treasurer, chairman and chairman of the Legislative Committee; and for founding the well recognized Heritage Dance Team to demonstrate and preserve heritage dancing.

His community activities include being a member of the choir, and for many years chairman of the board, of the Summersville Memorial United Methodist Church; serving as local, district and national officer in the Ruritan Club; member and president of the West Virginia Farm Bureau; and serving on the board of directors of a Child Care Center, Beckley Farmers' Market, Nicholas County Anti-litter Committee, Nicholas County Farmland Protection and Veteran's of Foreign Wars, among others.

Mr. Butcher has received dozens of awards and recognitions, including the USDA National Award for Development of youth "Opportunity Camps" (1968); Berea College Alumni Service Award (1984); Carroll Green Award for West Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Supervisor of the Year (1991); Lewisburg District United Methodist Church Layperson of the Year (1994); West Virginia Vandalia Award (1999); and Council Member of the Year by the Mountain Resource and Conservation Development Council (2001)

Mr. Butcher married Ruth Salyer, a Berea College classmate on December 23, 1949. They purchased a farm and developed it into a well known livestock farm, later branching into horticultural and other products. They have two children, Judy Ann and Keith Allen.

