

Former State FFA President Bill Gatton Gives Largest Single Gift in History of Kentucky FFA Foundation

Endowment will create Bill Gatton Kentucky FFA State Officer Leadership Scholarship Program

FLEMINGSBURG, KENTUCKY, UNITED STATES, February 1, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Kentucky native and philanthropist Bill Gatton is well-known for supporting many causes benefitting a huge number of people from all walks of life. His recent gift to the Kentucky FFA Foundation has a connection to a much earlier time in his own history - 72 years ago when he was the State President of Kentucky FFA.

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FFA seems almost to have been made for Gatton, who was raised on a farm in Western Kentucky. His entrepreneurial ventures began at age 8, when he started raising and selling an acre of watermelons every year, according to an

interview he gave to East Tennessee State University.

In that same interview, Gatton shared his “earning to live, living to serve” mentality, which has led him to donate so generously over the years.

“When I was 30, I thought I just might retire at 40. When I was 40, I decided I'd wait to 50. When I reached 50, I decided to delay retirement until I was 60. At 60, I realized I would never retire. Why? I do not want more money for myself, but I do desire to continue to work to earn money to support worthwhile endeavors, and I also believe active people live longer,” he said.

Gatton’s \$300,000 gift will be endowed through the Kentucky FFA Foundation’s Forever Blue Endowment Fund. Earnings from the endowment will fund the Bill Gatton Kentucky FFA State Officer Leadership Scholarship. This scholarship will allow Kentucky State FFA Officers to attend The Summit, an annual leadership training held in Washington D.C. with state FFA Officers from across the nation.

Gatton’s gift will help Kentucky State FFA Officers continue their development, helping them continue the long tradition of state FFA Officers who have gone on to become leaders in their

communities, in business, and across the nation. In fact, U.S. Congressman James Comer's very first trip to Washington, D.C. was as a Kentucky State FFA President, a position he and Gatton held in common.

"Bill Gatton is one of Kentucky's most successful businessmen and most generous philanthropists," said Representative Comer. "He never forgot his farm roots in Muhlenberg County and just made the largest individual donation in the history of the Kentucky FFA Foundation so he could help other young farm kids also achieve great things."

"It was a pleasure for me to have served as the Kentucky State FFA President many years ago," said Gatton in the letter that came with his gift. "From my personal experience, I know the FFA is an important activity in the lives of many Kentucky youth."

"Mr. Gatton's philanthropic work with many institutions is truly a testament to his visionary commitment to leadership," said Sheldon McKinney, executive director of the Kentucky FFA Foundation. "This gift will impact generations of future Kentucky FFA members, who like Mr. Gatton in 1950, have been elected to serve our association as a state FFA officer. It's our belief and hope that they will go on to be future farmers, elected officials, entrepreneurs....and philanthropists, who believe in paying it forward as much as Bill Gatton. It is an honor and privilege to steward his gift and see that his vision continues."

The Kentucky FFA Foundation cultivates partnerships which support the FFA vision to grow leaders, build communities, and strengthen agriculture. Kentucky FFA Foundation initiatives impact 15,700 FFA members in 158 FFA chapters across Kentucky. Learn more at kyffa.org/ky-ffa-foundation.

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Philanthropist Bill Gatton was the Kentucky State FFA President in 1950.

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