

# Heisner chosen as Guest of Honor

NATIONAL Dairy Shrine (NDS) is an organization that is dedicated to the promotion and preservation of the dairy industry. This could also be a personal mission statement for this year's Guest of Honor, **Bernard (Bernie) Heisner**. Heisner, a passionate dairy advocate, has spent his career promoting, encouraging, supporting and preserving the industry.



Heisner

His energy and commitment to organizations like NDS have helped them thrive. "His leadership, perspective and commitment to National Dairy Shrine have been both as an NDS leader and behind the scenes supporter," says Bonnie Ayars, past NDS board member and dairy program assistant at The Ohio State University.

"Heisner's service to NDS is exemplary as a board member, president and finance chairman in addition to coordinating the 50th anniversary celebration. Although our roots run deep in tradition, it is of no value unless leaders, such as Bernie, strive to preserve the 'rest of our stories,'" she continues.

Heisner spent 20 years serving dairy producers as general manager of COBA/Select Sires, Inc., Columbus, Ohio. During his tenure, the Select Sires' member cooperative experienced tremendous growth and prosperity. Heisner used his position, influence, passion and leadership to further enhance the dairy industry not only in the territory that COBA serves but nationwide. Additionally, Heisner actively served on the Ohio Dairy Producers Association, Ohio Purebred Dairy Cattle Association, Ohio Livestock Coalition, Ohio Holstein Association, Ohio Cattleman's Association, and the Hilliard (Ohio) Chamber of Commerce.

He opened up the doors of the COBA facilities to allow national organizations like National Dairy Shrine, Ayrshire Breeders' Association, American Guernsey Association and DHI Cooperative to utilize space to run their organizations more efficiently and facilitate better collaboration of ideas and routine office tasks. Heisner was not only the landlord, he was often the mentor, sounding board, reference person and industry contact for many of these organizations.

However, the group that benefits the most from Heisner's dedication and passion for the dairy industry is undoubtedly the youth. He spent countless hours encouraging, teaching, advising and mentoring young people. He was involved with dairy judging programs in Ohio and Illinois and led teams from both states to strong placings at national contests. Heisner, the National Collegiate Contest high individual in 1970, has continued to mentor and advise many of his students as they have embarked

on successful dairy careers.

This Illinois native grew up on a registered Holstein farm where he learned the value of the dairy cow and the people who serve her. Heisner has the uncanny ability to see the potential in people and get them into the right place to make a difference for themselves and those around them. His staff, fellow board members, committee members and friends have all been

touched by his leadership, gentle and not-so-gentle guidance to better the outcomes for all.

Earlier in his career, Heisner was a member of the Hoard's Dairyman editorial team. He also partnered with the organization to author the book *The Dairy Cow Today*.

Recently retired, Heisner and his wife, Sue, now reside in Fairview Heights, Ill., near their son, daughter-in-law and two grandsons. He

continues to serve the industry on local and state committees promoting a strong and sustainable future for agriculture.

The National Dairy Shrine Awards Banquet will be held in Madison, Wis., Thursday, October 2. For more information about those being recognized by National Dairy Shrine or for tickets to the awards banquet, contact the NDS office at [info@dairyshrine.org](mailto:info@dairyshrine.org). 

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