

The Simon Deeb Scholarship Fund

For a rural town in the Midwest United States, perhaps nothing is more cherished than agriculture. Teachers in this field have to stay up to date in order to adequately teach students about the ever changing conditions and available resources of the community. There is a particular importance placed on the education of land and the resources it provides.

Simon (Si) Deeb was the ideal man to teach agriculture to the Fulton County community. He was the son of Lebanese immigrant farmers, and came to the Fulton County area in 1929 when he was just two years old. He attended Metea High School and received a degree from Purdue University in 1949, a year after marrying his wife, Della.



While Si was attending Purdue University, he also taught in Rochester as a vocational school agriculture teacher. After he graduated college, he kept his job and worked within the Rochester School Corporation from 1943-1985. While doing this, he served as the head of the FFA chapter. As the head of the department, he led his students to win many national and state awards for soil and livestock judging, and was honored with the U.S. Office of Education's Honorary American Farmer Degree for outstanding work with the FFA. He also received the Purdue Agricultural Alumni Association's Certificate of Distinction for outstanding achievements in the enhancement of the agricultural profession.

The Rochester farming community meant a lot to Si, and he did everything he could to help fellow farmers with their business. He even started an adult farmer class in Rochester that grew to educate several families and adults about agriculture as a whole. Education was his top priority, and he always found the most joy out of seeing a student succeed.

"My dad had a philosophy that you do things so you can help others," Connie, Si's daughter, said. "He got the most happiness out of seeing other people's success."

While the FFA chapter and teaching took up most of his time, Si was also involved with several organizations around the community. He was a former member of the Fulton County Council, a 24-year member of the 4-H Livestock Committee, a longtime member of the 4-H Fair Board, a former member of the Rochester Water Works board, and had been active with the Democratic Party. At home, Si raised 6,000 chickens on the family's small 2.5 acre farm with the help of Della and their four children.

Si was also a member of Grace United Methodist Church, the John Purdue Club, the Rochester Classroom Teachers Association, the Indiana State Teachers Association, the National Education

Association, and was a past president of the Indiana Agriculture Teachers Association. During the summers, he took time off from being a teacher and ran a pool sale business that eventually came to be known as Allied Pools. Si was rightfully awarded the Rochester/Lake Manitou Chamber of Commerce Community Service Award in 1984.

Before Si's passing in 1987, his friends and family decided they needed to do something to honor the man who cared so much about the agriculture means of the community. They founded a scholarship fund in his name in 1980, and it was transferred to the Northern Indiana Community Foundation in 1996. The scholarship goes to students who plan to study in the field of agriculture after high school. With the scholarship the legacy of Si will live on forever, and students from the Rochester community will continue to be helped to achieve their agricultural goals.

"Dad took more pride in student's successes than his own, and the scholarship helps to carry that on," Connie said.