

Perry M. Schneider Memorial Award Fund

The impact of special individuals or actions can be felt across many miles and state lines. A perfect example is the way the Perry M. Schneider Memorial Award impacts students who might not live in Indiana. The fund was started by Doug Rice in memory of Perry Schneider, founder of the Lincoln, Illinois, branch of Agra Placements, Ltd. The company is dedicated to providing jobs for those interested in agriculture by working with agribusiness companies to find the best qualified applicants. The fund embodies the ideas that Perry had about the importance of education and the essentiality of helping others.

Doug and Perry were good friends for many years and business partners. They got to Agra Placements following different paths: Doug graduated from Southern Illinois University with a degree in ag business and accounting while Perry didn't graduate high school because he got married to his wife, Linda, and entered the workforce at age 16. Both worked similar jobs until they got to Agra Placements, at seed companies and co-ops as sales associates and managers. Perry founded the Lincoln, Illinois, branch of Agra Placements in 1978, and in 1979 he helped Doug found the Peru branch.

Outside of work Perry enjoyed golfing and fishing. He was the father of three children, Kent, Kari, and Karla, and spent a lot of time helping with their endeavors. For 12 years he served as chairman of the Abraham Lincoln Memorial Hospital board in Lincoln, and he was also very involved in church.

Doug is an avid bridge player and also finds time to get on the golf course frequently. He loves to read and is involved with several activities through church, and was the President of the Miami County Community Foundation in 2001 and a member for four years, from 1998-2002. He and wife Rosemary have four adult children, ranging in age from 42 to 32, named Steve, Tim, Melissa, and Lauren.

While Perry always stressed the importance of hard-work and dedication, he was also a very firm believer of providing the best education to young people. He was very active in the National Postsecondary Agricultural Student Organization (PAS), which provides students in agriculture-related collegiate programs the opportunity to gain employment experience. Perry served on the board of directors both nationally and state-wide and always wanted to somehow fund an award to go to the student members. He never got to put his own money into an award because he passed away suddenly in 1999, so Doug decided to start a fund in his honor.

The Perry M. Schneider Memorial Award Fund was started in 1999 and goes towards funding the employment interview contests that the organization holds every year. It is a way for students to compete in this educational contest without having to pay the fee that is attached to it.

"The fund was important to Perry," Doug said. "It is a token to his memory to have this fund in his name."