



Robert Edward Strayhorn

Bob Strayhorn's family lived and thrived in the Orange County area before it was even Orange County. He believes that his family arrived here in 1740, becoming an integral part of the community and county they called home.

Bob is an active member of one of the oldest churches in Orange County, New Hope Presbyterian Church. The current church building is located on land donated by one of his ancestors, Gilbert Strayhorn. Over his lifetime, Bob has been chairman of many committees in New Hope Presbyterian, and he is the guy who scrapes off snow with his tractor, hauls limbs away after a storm, and puts out mulch.

He has also dedicated time and energy to being a good steward of his beloved farm, and has been involved in numerous government and community groups that have sought to improve the lives of the friends and family around him.

When he was a boy in the 1940s, Bob worked with his mother to establish the first Farmers' Market in the Chapel Hill area. He helped dress fresh-killed chickens, gathered eggs, and prepared fresh vegetables for sale each week.

Bob has successfully developed one of the finest beef cattle operations in North Carolina. In 2004, he was presented with the Orange/Durham Cattlemen's Association first Lifetime Achievement Award. He is still an active farmer and agricultural resource within his community. He has been a member and leader of 4-H activities in Orange County for over 60 years and has participated in every Orange County 4-H Livestock Show in its 56-year history.

In 2002, Bob was awarded a Resolution of Appreciation from the Orange County Commissioners, in recognition of his many contributions to his county and community. He served as a member of the county's first Planning Board in the 1960s and 1970s. He was a member of the first Orange County Parks and Recreation Advisory Council in 1979, and was one of the first recipients of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Council Volunteer Service Award in 1999. Bob also served on the Advisory Group that developed the Orange County Master Parks and Recreation Plan, and on the Rural Character Study Committee in the 1980s and 1990s.

For 30 years, Bob has sponsored and hosted the countywide "Youth Fishing Rodeo" at his pond, attracting more than 350 youth and adults each year. He has worked with retailers to provide prizes and free equipment so children from all over Orange County would have a great event.

In 1998, Bob enrolled his farms in Chapel Hill and Little River Township in the County's Voluntary Agricultural District program, contributing the largest acreage of the program's participating farms.

Bob assisted the County in the acquisition of the Blackwood Farm property to be preserved intact as county park space. He works diligently with his fellow Orange County citizens to make our county a better place for its residents. He has always been a voice for cautious and studied change. His interest has been to preserve and protect the integrity of the place his family has called home for well over 300 years.