



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 15, 2011

Contact: Ronnie Simmons

Ph: 352.378.0060

FLORIDA FFA RECOGNIZES STATE ADVISOR FOR 41 YEARS OF SERVICE

GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA – Nearly 4,000 FFA members, teachers and guests gathered for the 83rd Florida FFA State Convention, June 13-17, 2011 in Orlando. As a part of the week-long convention appropriately themed “History in the Making”, a special recognition was held in honor of Belinda G. Chason and her 41 year career of service and dedication to FFA and Agricultural Education.

Belinda’s career of service began in 1970 when she joined the Florida Department of Education as a Staff Assistant in the Region 1 Office. With nearly twenty years of experience as a part of the support staff, in 1990 Belinda was tapped to become the Executive Secretary of the Florida FFA Association where she held that post for three years. In 1993, as student organizations moved outside of the Department of Education, Belinda’s position within the department was changed to Curriculum Specialist for Agricultural Education. In February of 1996, Belinda became the State Supervisor for Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources and the State FFA Advisor. Finally, in January of 2011, Belinda was named to the position that she currently holds as the Director of Career & Technical Education. While Belinda is being recognized for her retirement as the State FFA Advisor, she will officially retire from the Florida Department of Education in November 2011.

As a part of her recognition, more than 300 of Belinda’s closest friends, family and colleagues from around Florida and throughout the nation gathered for a reception in her honor.

“Thank you Florida FFA for 16 wonderful years as your State FFA Advisor”, Belinda said. “It has been more than I could have ever imagined. It has been an honor and privilege to work with such outstanding staff, teachers and members. I am truly honored and humbled by this recognition.”

Some of Belinda’s accomplishments include serving as the first female Executive Secretary of the Florida FFA Association, the first female State Supervisor of Agricultural Education, the first female State FFA Advisor and the first female in the United States to serve on the National FFA Board of Directors.

While serving on the National FFA Board of Directors, Belinda was instrumental in organizational changes including the relocation of the National FFA Convention from Kansas City, MO to Louisville, KY and the relocation of the National FFA Center from Alexandria, VA to its current home in Indianapolis, IN.



As a recognized leader in Agricultural Education, Belinda's service and commitment has been noted by many, including Governors, Commissioners of Agriculture and Education, Legislators and others. Most recently, Belinda was recognized in a Proclamation by Florida State Senator Greg Evers.

As a part of the recognition, Senator Evers proclaimed, "(I) do hereby extend to Belinda G. Chason my most sincere congratulations and my deepest appreciation for the exemplary commitment she has exhibited to the students of Florida, as well as the members of the National FFA Organization and do hereby proclaim Tuesday, June 14th, 2011 as Belinda G. Chason Day. I encourage all of her friends in Florida and throughout the nation to join her in a celebration of her service and dedication to her job."

In her honor, an endowment will be established to fund the **Belinda G. Chason Legacy Program Award**. Beginning in June 2012, this award will be awarded annually to an Agriculture Education program recognizing their excellence in the total Agriculture Education Model, including Classroom/Laboratory instruction, Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) and FFA.

On behalf of more than 15,000 FFA members and more than 40,000 students currently enrolled in Agricultural Education in Florida, as well as the entire Agricultural Education family, we extend our sincere gratitude for a lifetime of service and dedication to the industry of agriculture, education and FFA.

Former Agriculture Teacher and FFA Advisor from DeLand High School, Amy McAllister will succeed Belinda as the State Supervisor of Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources. Amy began her service with the Florida Department of Education on June 29th.

"Being selected Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources State Supervisor is great opportunity, and I am looking forward to serving Florida's agriculture industry and classroom," Amy said. "I will continue to work with our industry partners to benefit our students and workforce. I am also excited about working with the State FFA Officers, staff and Board of Directors."

The National FFA Organization, formerly known as the Future Farmers of America, is a national youth organization of 523,309 student members-as part of 7,487 local FFA chapters in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands. The National FFA Organization changed to its present name in 1988, in recognition of the growth and diversity of agriculture and agriculture education. The FFA mission is to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education. For more information visit www.flaffa.org or contact:

Ronnie Simmons
Florida FFA Association
P.O. Box 141570
Gainesville, Florida 32614
Ph: 325.378.0060
Email: Ronnie.Simmons@flaffa.org



###