

A Tribute to Charles B. Shuman

Charles Baker Shuman was born in 1907 on a farm in East Nelson Township, Moultrie County, Illinois. He attended a one-room country school, graduated from Sullivan High School, and received his BS and MS degrees in agricultural economics and agronomy from the University of Illinois. He immediately realized the many needs of farmers and farm families upon returning to the family farm after graduation. As such, he helped organize local electric and grain cooperatives, as well as the first consolidated school district in the county. He was an early hybrid seed corn producer, a breeder of Duroc hogs and Angus cattle, and became involved in local livestock marketing and production credit cooperatives.

During his 34 years of Farm Bureau leadership, having served as county, state, and national Farm Bureau president, he fought successfully to steer government agricultural policy toward a free-market system and away from the socialistic production and price controls of the previous 30 years. He retired as American Farm Bureau President in 1970 but continued to build his record of strong leadership on religious, corporate, and higher education boards. A committed Christian, he taught Sunday school at the Sullivan United Methodist Church for 65 years.

Shuman was the epitome of a leader, farmer, citizen, husband, and father with outstanding moral character. He was humble, dedicated, courageous, insightful, and respected by neighbors and U.S. Presidents.

