



## Local Agriculture Hall of Fame inducts 3

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STAR-BANNER

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OCALA - A cross section of the local agriculture community was represented on Thursday night with the induction of a nurseryman, a cattleman and a former assistant county agent into the Marion County Agriculture Hall of Fame.

The newest group of inductees brings the Hall of Fame roll to 23 individuals since the recognition began in 2003.

William "Bill" Reese, owner of Greenbriar Nurseries Inc., is the first nurseryman to be inducted into the Hall. He believes that working in agriculture is not a job but a way of life.

Reese has a long list of industry involvement, which includes leadership of organizations like the Florida Nurseryman and Growers Association, the Southern Nursery Association, Florida Urban Forestry Council and regional director of the American Nursery and Landscapers Association.

"There are 75 nurseries in Marion County which generate about \$32 million in revenue, so it's good to have a representative from that industry in the Hall of Fame," said Marion County Extension Agent David Holmes.

Holmes said Reese has done a lot locally and at the state and national level, "and in addition to his business, he's very civic minded as well."

Reese is honored to be a part of the prestigious group, "when you look at all the men and women who have been honored it's humbling to realize that you are being honored, too."

The induction of E.L. Strickland Jr. into the Hall of Fame is a recognition of his



*SPECIAL TO THE STAR-BANNER*  
William "Bill" Reese, left, owner of Greenbriar Nurseries Inc., is shown in this undated photograph with former Ocala Mayor Gerald Ertle.

strong dedication to the Southeastern Youth Fair and the Ocala Bull Sale. The 2008 youth fair was dedicated in his honor.

"He has done a lot for the community and other organizations have recognized his service as well," Holmes said.

In 2007 Strickland, manager of Circle Square Ranch, was named Florida Cattleman of the Year by the Florida Cattlemen's Association of which he's a longtime member.

Strickland said the induction is a special honor, "because it's from the people you work with ... it's something you earn."

The late Carey Robbins, a former assistant county agent and cattleman, was also inducted.

After leaving the extension service, he managed cattle operations at Finley Farms. He would later go to work for Ocala Lumber Sales Co., managing the timber and cattle side of the business.

Robbins was a former president of the Marion County Cattlemen's Association, director of the Florida Cattlemen's Association, state director of the Florida Forestry Association and director of both the Marion County Farm Bureau and Florida Farm Bureau. He was also a volunteer with the Southeastern Fat Stock Show, which evolved into the Southeastern Youth Fair.

Robbins' daughter, Bonnie Adams, said her father would have been honored by the induction but shy in the process.

"He died at age 50 in the height of his career and it's a big thing that 33 years later they still remember him and his work, and that thrills us," Adams said. "It's wonderful."

Adams was joined by her older siblings, David Robbins and Susan Lorick, in accepting the award in their father's honor.

"Our father was such a remarkable man," David Robbins said. "He loved young kids besides us being involved in agriculture, but was also involved with other 4-H families."

Holmes said it's amazing to see what all of the Hall of Fame inductees have done in the respective sectors of the agriculture industry.

The early portion of the evening was set aside to recognize extension service volunteers. Ken Colon, president of On Top of the World Communities, was the keynote speaker for the evening, highlighting service through volunteerism.

May Stafford, a registered nurse, was named an outstanding volunteer by the Family and Consumer Sciences program for her work with diabetes education in partnership with the extension service.

Kevin Yutani, a 4-H club leader and business owner, was recognized as the outstanding 4-H volunteer for his service to the 4-H horse show.

Master Gardener Olle Bildsten, committee chairman of the Master Gardener Plant Clinic, was named the program's top volunteer.

The Marion County Farm Bureau was named Friend of Extension for the organization's long-standing support of the extension programs.

Ruth Shuler, with the Salvation Army, was named Friend of the Southeast Livestock Pavilion for helping coordinate volunteers at the pavilion.

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