

Norman C. Denning, Sr. and Jean R. Denning Scholarship

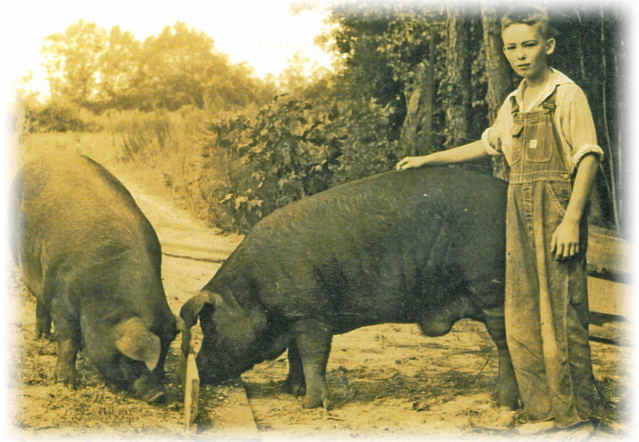
Established November 16, 2012



Johnston County Livestock Mutual Endowment
North Carolina Cooperative Extension Foundation

Early Life

The only child born to G.E. "El" and Mary Denning, Norman Denning's first experience with livestock occurred through a 4-H project in school. After purchasing two hogs from Mr. Carl Lee, he showed "Tom" and "Peggy" in the 1938 North Carolina State Fair, where "Tom" won grand champion Duroc boar. This win sparked an interest in breeding, which would evolve into a career that allowed Mr. Denning to gain recognition as one of the top Duroc breeders in the country.



Norman Denning with "Tom" and "Peggy"

Swine Production

Norman Denning's first livestock sale was in a tobacco warehouse, and billed under the name, "GE Denning & Son." For every year it was in operation, Mr. Denning submitted boars to the North Carolina Performance Tested Boars Program, which bolstered his status as a superior purebred swine producer. This standing led him to serve on various associations, including the North Carolina and Southeastern Duroc Breeder's Associations, where he served on the board and as president several times for each. While President of the NC Purebred Swine Association, the membership decided to organize an association for all swine producers in North Carolina. Under his leadership, the North Carolina Pork Producer's Association was formed in 1959, and Mr. Denning served as the first president. Over the years, Norman Denning continued helping run his father's country store, in addition to growing tobacco, corn, and soybeans in the Bentonville community. However, it was through breeding hogs that Mr. Denning met so many people throughout the county, state, and nation.



HA Turlington, Sr. with Mr. Denning at a sale in Rocky Mount. This hog was the top-selling bred gilt ever sold in a North Carolina auction.

One aspect of being a purebred swine breeder that Mr. Denning enjoyed most was the children he met who purchased hogs for 4-H projects. Experiencing the benefits of 4-H and livestock shows firsthand, Mr. Denning was a very active member of the annual livestock mutual fundraiser, the proceeds of which would support the Johnston County Youth Livestock Show & Sale. Additionally, he served on the Board of Directors for the Wayne County Livestock Development Association, which manages the Wayne County Regional Agricultural Fair, and was a member of the Wayne County 4-H County Council.

Norman Denning continued showing hogs in addition to raising them, which took him all over the country. A favorite show of Mr. Denning's was the Indiana State Fair, where his boar, "Coach V," won reserve

grand champion – even after traveling in the back of a truck for four days. Mr. Denning refused to sell “Coach V,” as the experience of the trip itself was worth more to him than the price of the hog. As recently as 2001, Norman Denning was still showing – and winning – having received grand champion honors in the Senior Showmanship Class at the NC State Fair.

Johnston County Commissioner

Seeing his uncle, C.L. Denning, serve as Johnston County Commissioner inspired Norman Denning to enter politics. Although he lost his first bid for commissioner, Mr. Denning’s competitive nature would not let him quit. He won his second attempt, and went on to serve 9 consecutive four-year terms as commissioner, from 1962-1998, of which 26 years were spent as board chairman. During Mr. Denning’s time as commissioner, he was instrumental in seeing several improvements made to Johnston County, including road upgrades, hiring a county manager, improving the county extension

service, and establishing rural water districts, which brought water lines to practically every section of the county. Additionally, Mr. Denning worked closely with Johnston Community College President John Tart to develop the present-day JCC campus. Mr. Denning was instrumental in seeing the Johnston County Livestock Arena built in 1977,

which gave the county a permanent venue for livestock events. Holding the title of county commissioner allowed Mr. Denning to serve on the Johnston County Health Board for 26 years, 20 as chair, be appointed to the NC Wildlife Resources Commission under Governor Bob Scott, and hold the title of Johnston County Fire Commissioner for 36 years.

As a result of his many years of service to the people of Johnston County, Mr. Denning received a Resolution of Appreciation from the Johnston County Commissioners in 1998. That same year, Mr. Denning also received the Order of the Long Leaf Pine. He was also honored as a Johnston County “Living Legend” by the Johnston County Heritage Center in 2005. Mr. Denning’s impact in the livestock community was also recognized when he



Mr. Denning (second from left) being sworn in to the NC Wildlife Resources Commission by NC Secretary of State, Thad Eure



Mr. Denning (third from left) with First Lady Lady Bird Johnson on a ride on the “Lady Bird Special Train”

was inducted in the Livestock Hall of Fame at the NC State Fair in 1980, the Johnston County Agricultural Hall of Fame in 1985, and the Johnston County Farm-City Week Committee in 1987. Most recently, Mr. Denning and his family were named the Johnston County Conservation Farm Family in 2011.

On March 3, 1952, Norman and Jean Rains of Princeton were married, and Mr. Denning gained a steadfast partner for all of his future endeavors. In addition to his wife, Mr. Denning has three children, four grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. Mr. Denning passed his love of livestock to his children and grandchildren, as all were active in showing and 4-H.



Mr. Denning's son, Norman Jr. with his grand champion hog at a county sale

His son, Norman Jr., continues to run the daily farm operations that were started by his father and grandfather. Mr. Denning is a member of St. John Pentecostal Holiness Church, where he has attended with his family for many years.



Mr. Denning presenting a scholarship to Susan Westbrook

Due to his many years of dedicated service to the people of Johnston County, the Johnston County Livestock Mutual Board is re-naming the scholarship the Norman C. Denning, Sr. and Jean R. Denning Scholarship. As a member and president of the board, it has always been Mr. Denning's hope to see the endowment

grow in order to assist more youth. Since the inception of the Livestock Mutual endowment, 17 youth have received scholarships totaling \$8,500. The board is encouraging your contribution to honor Mr. and Mrs. Norman Denning and to provide future scholarships for participants in the Johnston County Youth Livestock Program.

For your convenience, a pledge intent form is enclosed in this document. Additional intent forms for companies as well as payroll deduction forms are available. Please contact Bryant Spivey, County Extension Director, at (919) 989-5380 with any questions.