

Watkins Honored as a Distinguished Agricultural Alumnus

By Katie L. Reim



STILLWATER, Okla. – Richard Larry Watkins has obtained many noteworthy accomplishments and achievements throughout his career. His most recent honor is being named as a 2003 Distinguished Agricultural Alumnus for Oklahoma State University’s Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources.

Watkins graduated from Oklahoma State University in 1969 with a bachelor’s degree in Agricultural Education. He then completed studies in Veterinary Science at Walter Reed Institute of Research and attended the Institute for Organizational Management at Southern Methodist University.

He currently serves as the Executive Vice-President and General Manager of the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives. The association represents the interests of 250,000 members of 30 electric cooperatives.

With the title of General Manager, he has many duties including being the publisher of *Oklahoma Living* magazine. The magazine is the third-largest circulation in Oklahoma with 284,000 issues monthly.

In addition, Watkins is the General Manager and Treasurer of the Oklahoma Rural Electric and Telephone Employees Credit Union and Spokesperson for the Oklahoma Rural Electrical Program.

He also serves as Administrator for Oklahoma Electric Self Insurers Fund, Incorporated.

Watkins started his professional career as a Vocational Agricultural Teacher at Purcell High School, where he taught from 1971 to 1976. While at Purcell, he received widespread recognition by establishing a quality educational environment while inspiring young students to pursue excellence.

From 1976 to 1979, he served as Director of the Agricultural Development Division for the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce.

He coordinated all events, programs and policies related to economic improvement of the agricultural industry. Through recruitment services, he brought in an additional \$9-\$12 million annually into the Oklahoma City economy by making it the "Horse Show Capital of the World."

Before Watkins took his current position of General Manager with the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives, he served as the association's Director of Legislative Affairs. Here he developed and carried out legislative and regulatory programs.

He has served as past president of the National Rural Electric Statewide Manager's Association, Southwest American Livestock Foundation and Sirloin Club of Oklahoma.

Currently, he serves on the boards for OSU Agricultural Education Scholarship Foundation, Oklahoma Agricultural Leadership Program, Rural Enterprises Incorporated and Oklahomans for Energy and Jobs.

Watkins was honored as OSU's Graduate of Distinction for Agricultural Education in 1988. At that time, he was the youngest person to ever have received the award.

Watkins resides near Stillwater with his wife Natalea. He has two children, Rick and Jennifer.

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Katie L. Reim
Communication Specialist
OSU AG Communication Services
318 PIO
Stillwater, OK 74078
(405) 744-6792