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Marion County’s Bruce Chapin Inducted Into Oregon Farm Bureau Hall of Fame

Bruce Chapin, member of Marion County Farm Bureau, was inducted into the Oregon Farm Bureau Hall of Fame on Dec. 12, 2019 during the 87th Oregon Farm Bureau Convention at the Salishan Resort in Gleneden Beach.

The Hall of Fame, established in 1996, is the highest honor given by Oregon Farm Bureau (OFB). To be eligible, candidates must be nominated by their County Farm Bureau and have at least 35 years of active involvement in the organization. Chapin is the 34th member to be inducted into the elite OFB Hall of Fame.

Said Chapin, “I feel very fortunate to have become involved in Farm Bureau immediately after college. With only about 1% of Oregonians farming and ranching, agriculture needs a strong, united voice speaking out in the local, state, and federal government to keep us from being regulated out of business. Farm Bureau provides that respected, credible voice for Oregon’s farming and ranching community. I encourage every farmer to join and get involved in Farm Bureau.”

Said outgoing OFB President Sharon Waterman, “Bruce is a lifelong member who comes from a proud Farm Bureau family. He got involved at a young age after attending meetings with his father, Jack Chapin, who is also a member of the OFB Hall of Fame. We’re glad to report that this tradition continues the third generation.”

Chapin joined Farm Bureau in 1973 and, in his nearly five decades of service, contributed significantly at both the county and state level.

For Marion County Farm Bureau, Chapin has served in the roles of voting delegate, county board member, county vice president, and county president.

In 1979, he joined the OFB Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee, and in 1980, became chair.

Chapin was first elected to the OFB Board of Directors in 1981, where he represented Marion County for three years. He was re-elected to the board in 2007, where he proudly served through 2018.

Chapin’s ability to engage, take action, and develop policy was instrumental in the formation of the OFB Aggregate Committee, which he helped establish in 2002. He has served as chair of this active committee ever since.
Chapin’s work elevated issues surrounding aggregate mining in rural areas to the state Farm Bureau level. As a result, OFB has been able to protect many acres of valuable farmland from being lost forever to mining. He was such a renowned expert, that former Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski appointed him to serve on an aggregate/agriculture consensus workgroup from 2004 to 2007.

Knowledgeable and passionate about many ag topics, Chapin has participated in many OFB Issue Advisory Committees, including the Deciduous Fruits & Berries Committee, which he chaired from 1984 to 1988; Natural & Environmental Resources, Land Use, Budget, Resolutions, Nominations, Scholarship, Awards & Recognition, the OFB PAC, and the OSU Ag Committee.

An effective communicator who always does his homework, Chapin has testified at the state capitol countless times on a vast array of Farm Bureau priority bills.

In 2004, Chapin was awarded the prestigious OFB Top Hand Award for his outstanding leadership in and advocacy on behalf of Farm Bureau.

In 2015, he was the very first recipient of the “Jack Chapin Passion for Agriculture Award” — named after his father — from Marion County Farm Bureau. It recognized his decades of service and contributions to the local farming community.

More recently, Chapin volunteered with the OFB Ag Education Committee to give an informative presentation about hazelnut farming to groups of middle-school students as part of Oregon Ag Fest.

“Bruce is a true-blue advocate for agriculture, and he is always happy to share his passion, his time, and his expertise to promote agriculture. For decades, he has successfully built connections between farmers and non-farmers of all ages,” said outgoing OFB President Sharon Waterman.

Indeed, Chapin’s cherry and hazelnut farm has hosted many ag tours over the years, from legislative groups, to school classrooms, to international guests, to Farm Bureau members across the state and nation.

Beyond Farm Bureau, his passion for agriculture includes taking on leadership roles in organizations like the Oregon Hazelnut Commission, Federal Hazelnut Marketing Board, Oregon Cherry Growers, and Northwest Horticultural Congress.

In 1996, the Northwest Nut Growers Society named Chapin “Nut Grower of the Year” for outstanding service to the tree nut industry.

All of Chapin’s accomplishments would not have been possible without the love and support of his wife of 46 years, Velan, and the rest of his devoted family.

PHOTO 1: Bruce Chapin (far right), member of Marion County Farm Bureau, seen here with his wife Velan Chapin (far left), was inducted into the Oregon Farm Bureau Hall of Fame, the organization’s highest honor, on Dec. 12, by outgoing OFB President Sharon Waterman (middle left) and EVP Dave Dillon (middle right).

PHOTO 2: Cherry and hazelnut farmer Bruce Chapin, member of Marion County Farm Bureau, was inducted into the elite Oregon Farm Bureau Hall of Fame during 87th OFB Convention.

Oregon Farm Bureau (OFB) is a grassroots, nonpartisan, nonprofit, general farm organization representing the interests of farming and ranching families in the public and policymaking arenas. First established in Oregon at the county level in 1919 and the state level in 1932, Farm Bureau is organized in all 36 counties.

Oregon Farm Bureau President Barb Iverson, elected on Dec. 12, 2019, comes from a multigenerational family farm from Woodburn, raising industrial hemp, grass seed, squash, vetch seed, hazelnuts, wine and table grapes, and operating the Wooden Shoe Tulip Festival, which attracts over 160,000 visitors each year.