Vilas E. Young
2010 Nodaway County Agricultural Hall of Fame Inductee

Vilas E. Young was born November 16th, 1922 near Ridgeway, MO on a farm that is now a Missouri Century Farm.

Vilas started his school career at White Oak school near his family’s farm and graduated from Ridgeway High School and then went on to attend the University of Missouri and Purdue University, graduating in June 1946 from the University of Missouri after serving in the US Marine Corp during World War II.

After returning from overseas in 1946 and leaving the Marine Corp with a college education in hand, Vilas took a job in Moberly, MO teaching young veterans how to improve on the current farming practices. It was during this time in Moberly that Vilas purchased a used 1942 Chevy Coupe that needed engine repairs. Vilas took the Chevy to Noll Motors in Moberly where the Chevy was fixed and Vilas had to pay $107 dollars to a young book keeper named Marguerite. From this chance meeting a relationship formed and on September 12, 1948 Vilas and Marguerite were married. Vilas and Marguerite had seven children; Anita, Janice, Jeffery, Nina, Ellen, Nancy, and Eric.

Once again Vilas left his family to serve in the armed forces during the Korean Conflict. After fulfilling his military duties, Vilas returned to Ridgeway, MO to farm and teach. After several years farming with his family and teaching, Vilas was approached by Albert Hagan, extension farm economist, who offered Vilas a job as the Extension Balanced Farming Agent for Gallatin, MO. Vilas accepted this position and a long, prosperous career with the Extension began. After 3 years in Gallatin, Vilas was promoted to the Daviess County Extension Director.

On March 1, 1964, Vilas began his tenure as the Nodaway County Extension Director. In 1968 Vilas was awarded the Distinguished Service Award by the National Association of County Agricultural Agents. In 1970, after the University of Missouri Extension reorganized, Vilas became the Extension Director for a 5 county area in northwest Missouri which included Nodaway County. In June 1982, Vilas retired from the University of Missouri Extension after serving Nodaway County for over 18 years. After retirement, Vilas worked part time at Bank Midwest doing farm advisory work and public relations.

Besides being passionate about his work he was also a dedicated volunteer in his community. Vilas was involved with the Maryville Chamber of Commerce, he served on the local school board from 1969 to 1980, and he was a member of the Maryville City Council for 6 years, three of those years as the Mayor of Maryville. During this time, Vilas was part of the group that had a vision to build a water supply for the area that would eventually become Mozingo Lake. Vilas has also spent time driving cancer patients to treatments, delivering meals on wheels, and donating blood. Vilas is also active at the First Christian Church, Lion’s Host Club, and the Men’s Forum. It was also noted that Vilas loved wood working and is a devoted fan of Mizzou football.

Many of the details I just stated came from two autobiographies written by Vilas. The first, “From Here to There and Back”, is an autobiography about his time in the US Marine Corp; and the second, “This is Your Grandfather Speaking”, is an autobiography to his grandchildren.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in congratulating the 2010 Nodaway County Agricultural Hall of Fame Inductee, Vilas E. Young.