



To: Newsroom Directors and Assignment Editors

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James H. Baxter, Jr. honored with the Secretary's Award for meritorious service to Delaware Agriculture



Left to right: Jack Markell, Governor of Delaware, Jim Baxter, Ed Kee, Secretary of Agriculture

On Thursday, January 27, 2011 Delaware Secretary of Agriculture, Ed Kee, presented the Secretary's Award for Distinguished Service James H. (Jim) Baxter, Jr., from Georgetown. The award was given in recognition of meritorious service to Delaware agriculture.

Kee said, "I am recognizing someone who has had a long and storied career of service to Delaware agriculture, the State of Delaware, and to our country. He is one of the "greatest generation" who answered our country's call and fought in Europe during World War II. Congratulations Jim Baxter; you are an individual whose life has exemplified the timeless traditions of family farming and faithful community service."



Left to right: Kristy Baxter, Melissa Baxter Travers, Ruth Baxter, Jim Baxter, Jay Baxter, Jessica Baxter, Ed Kee, Secretary of Agriculture

"Tonight's award is one of many recognitions you have received through the years. For example, in 2002, Jim received the J. Frank Gordy Sr., Delmarva Distinguished Citizen Award given by the Delmarva Poultry Industry. In 1984, he received the Service Club Award for 40 years of leadership. He has continued to provide leadership and service since. We can safely say, he has provided more than 70 years of commitment and service and Jim, those of us in this room that know you, know you did it your way."

"Jim Baxter has played a tremendous role in Delaware's agriculture industry and in the community; and we owe him a debt of gratitude and recognition," said Governor Markell.

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Jim Baxter:

- Jim Baxter started farming land and raising poultry with his father in 1938. They farmed 72 acres of land and managed a small table egg production operation with 50 white leghorn hens.
- In 1941, he graduated from Georgetown High School (class salutatorian) and purchased his first 85 acre farm of cut off timber.
- In 1942, Jim and his father sold their hens and converted their farm to broiler production.
- In 1943 Baxter answered his country's call and served in 121st Calvary Group in Europe during World War II.
- In 1946, Jim restarted his career in agriculture by purchasing a second farm of 117 acres with the help of the G. I. Bill and with the help of his wife, Ruth, his two sons, Jimmy and Bill, he built an operation that in 2001 consisted of 1,700 acres of owned, tillable land (with an additional 400 acres of leased land), a retail-farm equipment business, and a broiler grow-out capacity of 385,000.
- Following the untimely and tragic loss of his two sons, Jim continues to farm the land that is now managed by him, his wife Ruth, and their grandson, Jay.

- He has served the agriculture and his community as follows:
 - President of Future Farmers of America
 - Named Diamond State Farmer by Delaware FFA
 - Treasurer of the Agriculture Club of the University of Delaware
 - President of the Sussex County Farm Bureau- 2 terms
 - Sussex County 4-H Leader
 - Charter member and President (elected in 1952) of the Delaware State Farm Bureau- (membership increased from 363 to 1,096 farm families during his time)
 - Member of the American Farm Bureau Federation Board of Directors- four years beginning in 1959
 - Chairman of the Poultry Committee within the American Farm Bureau
 - Director of the Delmarva Poultry Industry (DPI) 6 years
 - Chairman of the Grain Growers Committee of DPI
 - Member of the Farm Land Evaluation Advisory Committee
 - Jaycees Outstanding Young Farmer for the State of Delaware
 - State Champion Safe Driver Ford Good Driver League
 - Charter Member, Past President and Board Member of the Millsboro Ruritan Club
 - Past President of the Indian River School Board and member of the Georgetown School Board - 10 years total service
 - Local Chairman for American Red Cross and the American Heart Association Fund Drives
 - Member of the Georgetown-Millsboro Rotary Club
 - Member of Grace United Methodist Church – participating and chairing many boards at various times
 - Chairman of the United Methodist Parsonage Committee

Jim Baxter has been active in the political arena through the years as well:

- Sussex County Recorder of Deeds, 1967-1974. He was twice elected to this county-wide position. During his tenure, the office was computerized and all the records were placed on microfilm.

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- Governor Pete Dupont recognized his passion for agriculture and asked him to serve in his cabinet as Secretary of Agriculture.
- He ran a spirited, but unsuccessful, campaign as a candidate for the U. S. Senate against incumbent Senator Joe Biden.
- Charter Member and past Secretary and Treasurer of Sussex County Active Young Republicans
- Treasurer of the Millsboro Republican Club
- Volunteer on the committee to elect John J. Williams for US Senate
- Chairman of the Sussex County Republican Party
- Chairman of the Sussex County Volunteers to elect William V. Roth, Jr. for Congress and Senate
- Delegate to the Republican National Convention in 1976
- State Chairman of Farmers for Regan and Bush

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