

MACC VOICE

March 2016 Newsletter
(Special Edition)



Mid America Cooperative Council

Mid America Cooperative Council
6302 Rucker Road, Suite H Indianapolis, IN 46220
Phone: (317) 726-6910 Fax: (317) 726-2630
E-mail: knowledge@macc.coop Web: <http://www.macc.coop>

Dennis Bolling to be Inducted Into The Cooperative Hall of Fame



Dennis Bolling, outgoing president and CEO, United Producers, Inc. (UPI); will be inducted into the Cooperative Hall of Fame on May 4, 2016.

A champion of the co-op business model and visionary cooperative educator, Dennis Bolling has spent close to four decades serving the cooperative sector. He brings a legacy of service to and advocacy of farmer cooperatives to the 2016 Cooperative Hall of Fame.

Bolling's cooperative career began in 1980, when he began working at the Louisville Bank of Cooperatives, a predecessor institution to CoBank. There, one of his accounts was Producers Livestock Association, the organization that later became **United Producers, Inc. (UPI)**; an Ohio-based livestock marketing, finance and member services cooperative serving farmers in the Midwest.

When he joined the organization in 1989, Bolling helped then Producers Livestock Association emerge from the economic downturn that plagued the agriculture sector throughout much of the 80s. In 1999, he oversaw a series of mergers that doubled the co-op's size and expanded its services to producers in ten states. In late 2001, Bolling steered UPI through a complex, eight-year legal and financial labyrinth in the wake of a Ponzi scheme that left it bankrupt and \$80 million in debt. Under his leadership, UPI not only survived what was widely seen as a crippling setback, but its members emerged protected and its operations undamaged. Today, UPI is the largest livestock marketing cooperative in the U.S., serving 45,000 members, marketing 3 million head of livestock and recording annual sales of \$1.2 billion last year.

Once UPI was stabilized, Bolling turned his attention to his lifelong passion, cooperative education and development. An advocate of strong board governance, he developed a board certification program and used the Farm Credit Services' leadership modules to provide advanced governance training to co-op boards. At a time when the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives' (NCFC) education program was on the brink of disappearing, Bolling helped reinvent it and ensure its broad support. To build a more engaged and efficient workforce, he created UPI University, which includes company orientation, sales and management training courses. At CoBank, Bolling led the committee that developed its director education program, writing and presenting much of it himself.

Bolling was instrumental in creating numerous cooperative education organizations, including the game-changing Center for Cooperatives,

Business and Community Education and Development at Ohio State University and the **Mid America Cooperative Council**. Bolling serves on the Executive Committee and as chair of the Education Committee at NCFC, where his goal is to help cooperative directors understand the scope and complexity of their role, acquire the skills they need to apply around the board table, learn to conduct business with accountability and transparency and make informed decisions as part of a diverse group. Bolling also chairs the board of the NCFC Foundation, where he has set fundraising strategies and expanded the organization's scope of work.

Bolling recently completed a term as chair of the LEAD Program, a two-year leadership program affiliated with Ohio State. In July, he received the Reginald J. Cressman Award from the Association of Cooperative Educators in recognition of his mentorship and profound impact on the development of cooperative leaders. (*excerpts from CDA press release December, 2015*)

About The Cooperative Hall of Fame



Cooperative
Hall of Fame

The Cooperative Hall of Fame is housed in the offices of the National Cooperative Business Association in Washington, DC, where a permanent collection of commemorative plaques

tells of the contributions made by each inductee. The Cooperative Development Foundation administers the Cooperative Hall of Fame. Nominations are received annually and reviewed by a screenings and selection committee, each composed of current leaders from the various sectors of the U.S. cooperative movement.

These criteria are used to evaluate the individual's record of achievement:

1. Demonstrated statesmanship, innovation, personal commitment, leadership, and vision beyond the professional competence and requirements of the position for which he/she was employed to serve within the cooperative sector. If the individual has served as a volunteer, she/he should have demonstrated the same leadership qualities to advance the cooperative form of enterprise.
2. Achieved identifiable and lasting changes to improve and promote cooperatives.
3. Inspired and persuaded others to act to advance the cooperative system.
4. Recognized for work relating to cooperatives at one or more of the following levels - local, regional, national or international.

The Cooperative Hall of Fame has many different support options, including Sponsorships and Congratulatory Listings. Please visit the following link for more information about sponsorships, listings and registration: <http://heroes.coop/sponsors/>

[Dennis Bolling and MACC](#)

Todd Beckwith, Regional Manager of CHS Business Solutions - "Dennis was instrumental in the Ohio Council of Cooperatives leading to the forming of the Mid America Cooperative Council. His knowledge of the history of the organization, contacts in the cooperative community and passion for cooperatives and cooperative education, was a driving force in the forming of MACC and its ultimate structure and success.

His commitment to the cooperative industry crosses many sectors and years, from his days with CoBank through his time as CEO of United Producers. His passion for the Council, Cooperatives and the Agricultural Industry has been an inspiration to many of us. Thank you Dennis."

Thomas Schlenker, Retired Executive Vice President /Farm Credit Services of Mid-America - "An enthusiastically dedicated and committed visionary of the cooperative philosophy and business model, Dennis Bolling grasped the ultimate importance of continual board, employee and member education. His multiple leadership roles over the years provided a positive platform when cooperatives struggled through not only the economic downturns of the agriculture economy, but also during a period when the cooperative business model experienced challenging times of cooperative mergers and closures.

I was associated with Dennis for nearly 25 years through the Ohio Council of Cooperatives, the Ohio Agriculture Council and the formation of the Mid America Cooperative Council. His leadership, insights and dedication proved instrumental to these organizations' viability during years of a dynamic and changing agriculture business structure.

Dennis's leadership in cultivating and developing leadership and educational programs for member cooperatives, proved instrumental in strengthening Cooperative organizations. His years of conviction to the Cooperative model and the impact of his committed vision and leadership, emphatically make Dennis Bolling most worthy of his induction into the Cooperative Hall of Fame."

Craig Adams, Board Chairman of United Producers, said "Dennis successfully led the company through some challenging times but always remained focused on serving farmers and protecting their cooperative. We thank Dennis for his contributions to UPI's success and wish him well." (excerpts from www.grainnet.com - March 30, 2015)



2015 Association of Cooperative Educators (ACE) Award Winner Dennis Bolling (left), and presenter Rod Kelsay, Exec. Director/MACC (right). The Reginald J. Cressman ACE Award recognizes an ACE Member who demonstrates outstanding commitment to staff development

as exemplified by long-time cooperator Reginald J. Cressman.

For more information about the Association of Cooperative Educators, visit <http://ace.coop/>.

[Rod's Thoughts](#)

Dennis Bolling is considered the father of the Mid America Cooperative Council (MACC). We are proud that he will be recognized for that and other cooperative leadership achievements, by being inducted into the Cooperative Hall of Fame. The ceremony will take place at the National Press Club in Washington, DC on May 4, 2016.

In 2000, Dennis spirited the initiative that changed MACC from a small council of mostly Ag cooperatives operating in central Ohio with part time staff, to a multi-state cooperative council with membership from over a dozen different business sectors. Dennis foresaw the need for cooperative education that has yielded nearly 10,000 participants in MACC programs and presentations. Additionally, Dennis and William Nelson, a 2015 Cooperative Hall of Fame inductee and past President of CHS Foundation, led an effort to re-establish director education with the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives.

Dennis joined United Producers, Inc. (UPI) in 1989, after developing and leading director training programs with their board of directors. He saw the importance of director education in order for the board to understand their unique role as elected leaders of their cooperative. Prior to that, Dennis worked for CoBank, UPI's banker.

Over the next two decades, he captained UPI and led them through multiple mergers and bankruptcy reorganization. UPI has grown into a strong livestock marketing cooperative, allowing independent producers to have market access for their livestock. Dennis has always been a leader for cooperative education. While at CoBank and at UPI, he voiced the importance for knowledgeable leaders, employees and members of cooperatives.

He has often said that, "Cooperatives are unique businesses that must be cared for properly. Cooperative education is the nourishment that enlightens the members, employees and especially their directors." He witnessed too many cooperatives that have gone under because there was no education, and the board was unable to sustain their cooperative as a profitable business.

Dennis also led the charge to establish an advisory committee for the Cooperative Endowment Fund, at The Ohio State University. The fund was established in the 1970s with the help of OSU professor Chuck Ingraham, whose purpose was to support cooperative research. In 2004, that advisory committee of seven cooperative leaders with strong ties to The Ohio State University was established. Those original members were Dennis Bolling, Al Holdren, Eric Parthemore, Tom Schlenker, Don Schriver, Gordon Wallace, and Dan Walski. Annual reports were presented to the committee through 2014, when a Center for Cooperative and Farm Income Enhancement was established. This center develops and delivers innovative and integrated research and educational programs for the cooperative community.

This newsletter is a tribute to a man who dedicated his life to cooperative excellence, through education. **We honor Dennis Bolling for having the vision to engage multiple cooperative sectors across multiple states, to create a council of cooperatives. Thank you Dennis, you have enlightened thousands about the beauty of cooperative businesses and the importance of cooperative education to keep that fire aglow.**