



TELEPHONE 904/488-6336

NEWS RELEASE

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & CONSUMER SERVICES • MAYO BLDG.
TALLAHASSEE 32399-0800

CABINET HONORS DOYLE CONNER, FFA STUDENTS

CONTACT: Bob Blankenship 904/488-3022 PRN/GP/GW/GO 121890 EMB

TALLAHASSEE, Fla., Dec. 18--Commissioner of Agriculture Doyle Conner was honored by the Florida Cabinet Tuesday for his "commitment to public service to Florida and the Nation, and for serving the people of Florida with strength, dignity and courage of conviction as Commissioner of Agriculture.

The resolution honoring Conner, who has served on the Cabinet as Commissioner of Agriculture for 30 years, was introduced by State Treasurer Tom Gallagher. It was the last regular Cabinet meeting before Conner retires on January 8, 1991.

The resolution noted that Conner is a native Floridian, who graduated from the University of Florida in 1952 with a degree in agriculture and demonstrated his leadership ability early on by being elected national president of the Future Farmers of America.

While still a sophomore at UF, he was elected to the first of five terms in the Florida House of Representatives, where, at the age of 28, he was the youngest person ever elected Speaker of the House.

The resolution also praised Conner for his "lifelong love for Florida and the improvements he sought to make in agriculture and the lives of all Floridians.

Conner was first elected Commissioner of Agriculture in 1960 and the resolution noted he has been "a steady force on the Cabinet" in a public service career that "spans the modern era of (Florida) history."

Among those attending the ceremony were Conner's family, former Cabinet members with whom the Commissioner served, members of the Florida Supreme Court, and long-time associates from the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

In his remarks, Conner thanked the "dedicated people in the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services who have built the finest department in the country."

He also thanked his family for their patience in the long days while he pursued his career in public service.

"I've been honored and privileged for the past 30 years to sit on the Cabinet," which provides an open forum for the people of the state, Conner said.

Later in the meeting, Conner introduced a resolution honoring five FFA members from around the state who won individual or team contests at the national FFA convention.

Among those honored was Tracie Daniels of Branford High School, who is the 1990 National FFA Agriscience Student of the Year.

Also honored was Jeremy Lowery of Ernest Ward High School in Century, as winner of the 1990 National FFA Forestry Management Proficiency award.

Kyra Bowman, Shana Phillips and Margaret Baron all of Williston High School were honored as members of the 1990 National FFA Champion Meat Judging Team.

"They're the best in the nation," Conner said, noting that FFA had always been important in his career. "We take great pride in these young people."

In a lighter moment during the ceremony, Tony Fontana, chairman of the Florida Parole Commission, read a "certificate of parole," releasing Conner on parole for retirement until the year 2091, under the supervision of his wife, Laurita.