



Winn retires from SEC board after 26 years of service



By Mark Thomas, Community Relations Coordinator

Sitting at his kitchen table, looking out on the green fields of his Nottoway County farm, Herbert E. Winn smiles about an experience he had with a Southside Electric Cooperative (SEC) member.

Winn says he hadn't been on the SEC board long when an ice storm hit the area. He remembers a call from a member who asked if he could help get her electricity restored. Winn went to check on the member to make sure she was all right and also explain the Cooperative's policy about getting the power flowing again. As he was leaving her driveway, the electricity returned.

“She thought I was the best person in the world,” Winn says with a laugh.

Elected to the Board of Directors in May 1991, Winn served 26 years, including the last nine as treasurer, before retiring April 1. Winn’s fellow board members and staff saluted him at his last meeting in March.

“Herbert Winn is a true gentleman in every way,” says Dr. Frank Bacon, chairman of the SEC board. “His loyalty, commitment and dedication to the hard work of the SEC board was vital over his 26 years of service. He had a very calm and coordinated way to size up very challenging problems and identify practical solutions. In every aspect of his performance on the board, Herbert always made the SEC membership’s interest his number one priority. He was truly a team player on our board and will definitely be missed.”

A day before that final board meeting, Winn looked back at his tenure and noted a number of accomplishments made by the Cooperative.

Serving with three management executives, John Anderson, Larry Longshore and Jeff Edwards, Winn lists construction of a new office building and shop in Crewe, improvements in the call centers that allowed for better communication with members and field staff, more ways for members to pay bills and consolidated purchasing with other cooperatives as some of the positive changes in the last 26 years.

“That gave us a better price being able to purchase in larger quantities,” says Winn, who succeeded J. Woodrow Martin on the board. When Winn came on the board, there were 10 directors in 10 districts. It’s now nine directors representing three.

He adds that substations have been built and existing ones updated, equipment has been improved and technology has advanced. Winn also mentions starting the Power Line Worker Training School, assisting with a truck driver training school and supplying electricity for the FASTC project, all at Fort Pickett.

“Perhaps the main contribution I have made as an individual was contact with the members. Many members have asked for and received assistance with individual problems.”

“Mr. Winn dedicated 26 years to assisting with the improvement of service to the members of SEC, and did so with distinction,” says Edwards, the Cooperative’s current president & chief executive officer. “He was always approachable, friendly and respectful in all of his interactions with the members and employees alike.”

Winn, who’s 85, says he will miss the members and trying to help them. He will also miss the fellowship with other board members and staff. He says he has enjoyed his time on the board.

As a director, Winn only missed one annual meeting and that was when his great-nephew was getting his wings as a Navy pilot. Winn served in the Army, rising to the rank of staff sergeant. He recalls winning several three-day passes for his marksmanship and other skills.

A graduate of Randolph-Macon College where he received a sociology degree and played football and baseball, Winn spent 42 years in education as a teacher, coach and principal before finishing his career as director of instruction in Sussex County. Winn also earned a master's in school administration from the University of Virginia. He served eight years on the Southside Virginia Community College board, including one year as chairman.

He and wife Joyce have been married more than 60 years. They have a small beef cattle operation not far from Blackstone and are members of Rocky Hill United Methodist Church and Bellefonte Grange. Winn has enjoyed fishing, hunting and golf, attaining a 5 handicap. He says he once missed a hole-in-one by inches that would have won him a car. Today, he likes watching sports on television, including the Wahoos from his alma mater, working with his Black Angus cows and seeing the purple martins that stay for a short time in his two-dozen birdhouses and gourds.

Clive Pettis has succeeded Winn on the SEC Board of Directors.

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