

Reflections of the Past: One is Silver

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A favorite song of friendship sung at many 4-H camps reminds us to "make new friends and keep the old, one is silver and the other gold." One of NEAFCS's "golden" friendships is with the National 4-H Youth and Conference Center in Washington, DC, that had its own anniversary celebration last year – the 50th anniversary of the center's opening. Having common goals and missions, the two organizations have an interwoven history over the past 50 years. While researching our history for the 75th celebration, I came across a lovely piece of this shared history.

In 1958, our Association's National Board, then called the National Home Demonstration Agents' Association, knowing that the new 4-H Center was opening the following year, wanted to purchase a significant gift to recognize this event. Funds for this purpose were received from Friendship Parties held at Annual Sessions held in the Western and Eastern Regions. A total of \$446 was used to purchase a 5-piece silver tea and coffee service. Florence Hall, former field agent for Extension USDA, and former chairman of our Advisory Board, personally assisted in shopping for this gift.

On June 16, 1959, on the day of its formal opening and dedication, NHDAA President Velma B. Johnson (WV) and President-elect Irby Barrett (AL) presented this gift to the National 4-H Club Center in Washington, D.C. Receiving this gift were J.O. Knapp (WV) Chairman of the National 4-H Foundation Trustees and W.W. Eure, 4-H Center, Program Director.

(You may click on any of these images for a high-resolution version.)



The tea and coffee service was engraved: "Presented to the National 4-H Center by National Home Demonstration Agents' Association 1959".

Our history book shares that during the presentation, Johnson remarked: "As home demonstration agents, we have always shared the responsibility of the 4-H Club program with the other county workers of the Cooperative Extension Service. We have been actively interested in the development of the National 4-H Club Center in the Nation's capital. We have chosen our gift of sterling silver with a great deal of care and significance. We hope that our gift will be a lasting one which will serve the Center for its lifetime, and that will signify to all who enjoy it, the gracious living which we try to help all families whom we serve to attain. The National Home Demonstration Agents' Association presents this silver service with our best wishes to the National 4-H Club Center for a long, noble and useful life of service to the Nation's youth." Now fast forward 50 years to 2009.

I contacted Jennifer Z. McIver at the National 4-H Youth and Conference Center to check on the status of the silver tea and coffee service. After 50 years, could it still be there? Jennifer located three pieces in storage along with other 4-H artifacts in the office of the food service

division. She noted at the time that the pieces were in need of a good polishing. Boniene Scroggs, National Sales and Marketing Manager at the National 4-H Center stepped to the plate, volunteering to use a little silver polish and elbow grease as she lovingly revived the pieces.

Mclver emailed that this "lovely part of our history" is now on display in a cabinet at the Center between the President's Office and resource development wing. According to Mclver, "The cabinet looks like one you might find in someone's dining room and contains other 4-H memorabilia, so this seemed like a fitting placement."

The National Home Demonstration Agents' Association's desire to have a lasting gift to recognize the gracious living and the long friendship between the two associations is a reality. While our tribute to the National 4-H Youth and Conference Center is shiny silver in appearance, it truly reflects a "golden" friendship between 4-H and NEAFCS.

Congratulations to the National 4-H Youth and Conference Center on their golden anniversary!

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