



Traditional Arts Indiana Presents 2016 State Fair Master Pearce McKinney's Fifth Generation Family Farm



State Fair Masters

Traditional Arts Indiana and the Indiana State Fair wish to recognize individuals for their mastery of a particular tradition and for their dedication to sharing their knowledge at the fair, year after year. These men and women give generously of themselves by exhibiting, demonstrating, or performing, at both the county and state fairs. They are well known by neighbors and friends in home communities for a particular skill and for their commitment to passing their excellence on to others. To learn more about the State Fair Masters, please visit:

traditionalartsindiana.org/programs/indiana-state-fair/state-fair-masters/










Pearce McKinney: Five Generations on the Family Farm

Pearce McKinney has been committed not only to his award-winning sheep, but also to the upkeep of his farm, home, and property in Wingate, Indiana.

Pearce's family has lived on this farm for five generations. In 1924, his father, Lawrence, named the property Walnut Knoll for the many walnut trees that still dot the landscape today. Over the years, Pearce has worked to restore the old farmhouse back to the way it looked in the early 1900s.

Since they took over the family farm, both Pearce and his wife Alice have left their imprint on the property through their restoration work and modern additions. Pearce restored the barn at Walnut Knoll, which was originally built in 1885. Maintaining the functionality of this historic building, he constructed a modernized hay chute inside the barn and added an office in the space to help with his daily farm responsibilities. In 1991, Alice engineered Fence Line Feeders, an innovative method of feeding the herds of sheep at Walnut Knoll.

Walnut Knoll Featurette, directed & edited by Zane Knight: vimeo.com/175839802

On the farm, Pearce and Alice have raised Suffolk and Montadale sheep. The sheep interest began in 1954 when Pearce borrowed \$300 from his grandmother to buy three ewe lambs. Pearce worked with sheep breeders in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and in 1963, he raised and showed the Reserve Grand Champion Ram at the Chicago International. Pearce has been actively involved in several Suffolk sheep associations, serving on both national and local committees, and he has judged competitions across the country.

At Walnut Knoll, Pearce and Alice enjoy their time at home with their three Great Pyrenees dogs and the beautiful gardens Alice maintains. Upon reflection on his life and career, Pearce has often liked to say, "If you love what you're doing, I'm sorry, it ain't work." Pearce has always been proud of his family lineage and cherished the daily tending of his flock.

In addition to his work on the farm, Pearce has been a generous benefactor of the Indiana State Fair and the 4-H program for many years. He has contributed to the Sale of Champions, which helps fund 4-H members participating in livestock competitions. Pearce has served on the Board of Animal Health and the Indiana Sheep Breeders Association, and also led an initiative to give fairgoers an opportunity to see and sample lamb produced in Indiana. Through his work with the State Fair, Pearce has set an example for future leaders of Indiana farming communities.

