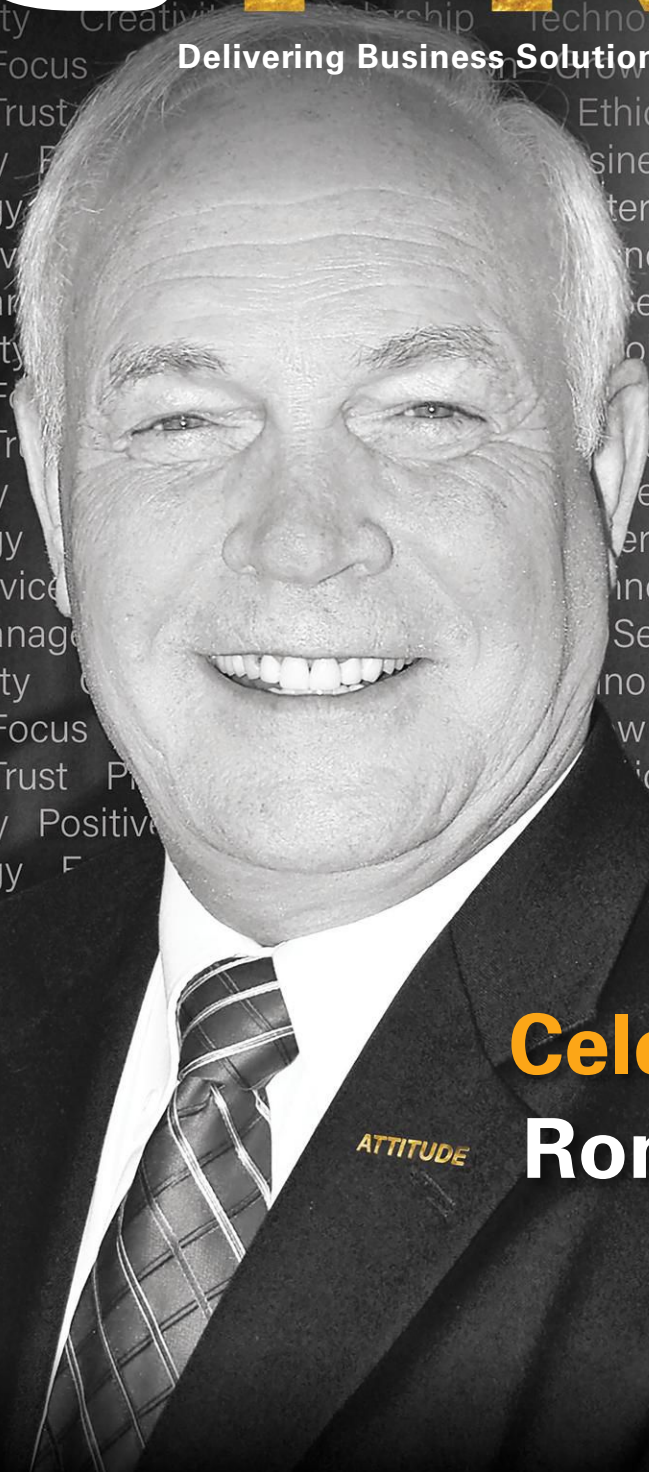


FARM JOURNAL'S

AGPRO

Delivering Business Solutions // February 2020



Celebrating
Ron Farrell

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A Lighted Path

Industry icon Ron Farrell's legacy will live long into the future

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With nonstop energy, a navy sport coat and a gold "Attitude" pin, Ron Farrell shook hands, made friends and helped mold a considerable footprint (and set of leaders) across the agricultural industry. Name a significant milestone in the business from the past 30 years, and Farrell was either in the room or influencing the process along the way.

Champion of ag retail: After a career that spanned roles as a manufacturing rep, wholesaler, ag retailer and farmer, Farrell retired and formed the ultimate career capstone: Farrell Growth Group.

"I had an enormous regard for what went on between the lines," says Steve Watts, a partner at Farrell Growth Group. "It was the way he approached things with people and the way he integrated different points of view without losing his way in terms of what he wanted to accomplish."

At Farrell Growth Group, he synergized industry experience

with a thick Rolodex to form the AgExcellence and CoExcellence industry peer groups.

"He always had the retailer at heart. He wanted to see independent retailers succeed," says Dan Frick, a founding AgExcellence member and CEO of Frick Services.

"One of the things I learned from Ron is you don't just ask questions to chat ... you ask a question and listen. Ron would digest what you said and piece together the rest of the puzzle. He was a great listener," says CoExcellence member Dave Coppess, executive vice president of sales and marketing at Heartland Co-op.

Additionally, Farrell was an adviser in more than 100 mergers and acquisitions in the industry.

Elevating the professionalism of agronomic advising: Farrell is



Ron Farrell
1943-2020

named as one of the early visionaries in establishing the Certified Crop Adviser (CCA) program 28 years ago, and he served as the national board chair in 1995. Luther Smith, director of the program, explains Farrell thoroughly supported creating an accredited program for agronomists across ag retail. Today, 13,500 CCAs work across North America.

Adoption of precision ag: Twenty-two years ago, Premier Crop Systems was founded as a data management platform for ag retailers to use in managing farmers' data. It was a heavy

"I most appreciate Ron's commitment to stewardship of our industry's technologies. His vision for that stewardship and understanding of the industry politics and structure left an indelible and positive impact on our inputs sector."

—Jay Vroom, past president, CropLife America

"I always found him to be thoughtful, insightful and incredibly well-connected on what was shaping the face of agriculture. I also was lucky enough to attend a number of Farrell Growth events and saw first-hand the value of the network that Ron and his team had created." —Paul Rea, senior vice president, Agricultural Solutions North America, BASF

lift—particularly at that time—but Farrell saw digital ag as the future and worked to create a solution needed in the industry.

“Throughout his career, Ron was a strong advocate that ag retailers needed to ‘own the trusted adviser relationship,’” describes Dan Frieberg, the first president of Premier Crop Systems. “For Ron, the evolution of ‘precision ag’ was wrapped in using data to own that trusted adviser relationship.”

Digitizing the ag retail business: AgGateway CEO Wendy Smith credits Farrell as a key driver in founding the nonprofit.

Kelly Farrell, his daughter and partner at Farrell Growth Group, says, “He was constantly thinking, and his mind was always running toward what’s best for the industry. He had the gift of being a dreamer and a strategic thinker.”

Mentoring leaders: Farrell’s positive attitude and optimism for

Future Of Farrell Growth Group

At the beginning of 2020, Jim Farrell joined Farrell Growth Group after a 34-year career with Farmers National Company. Jim believes his brother Ron’s greatest legacy will be how he championed the ag retailer. And Jim says he will work to serve ag retailers by helping them analyze the changing landscape of ag and position their companies for the short-term challenges while having an eye for the future.

agriculture lives on in the people he invested his time in.

“He was engaging and so inclusive that he just found people,” Watts says. “It was just his perspective that every day brought new possibilities, and those possibilities ended up intersecting.”

Ag retailer Amy Asmus says, “He never asked for your opinion unless he was willing to listen to it. He had a way of loosening and then morphing ideas from what he thought to what he heard to what he thought should be done. He wouldn’t tell me what to do. He’d

ask me a million questions until I figured out what I needed to do. We have to carry on that theme of collaboration he brought to everything he did.”

Farrell simultaneously recognized challenges and outfitted his cohort to see opportunities.

“There is not a week that doesn’t go by and I’m dealing with something difficult, and I pull back, and Ron’s words would remind me to be optimistic and have a good attitude. Because simply, you can’t solve problems unless you do that,” Frick says. **AP**

“Ron was so positive and down to earth—to the earth of agriculture and especially the retail business. He was our champion, and we will miss him.” —Tim McArdle, chief operating officer, Brandt Consolidated

“He had a gift for seeing through the buzz and clutter of today to the fundamental strategic issues that deserve our attention. I’m very pleased we were able to recognize his contributions to ag retail through our Jack Eberspacher Lifetime Achievement Award this past year.” —Daren Coppock, CEO and president, Ag Retailers Association

“He was the industry standard. I was most impacted by the standards he set as a human. Knowing him made me a better person. An industry, in the end, is made up of the people in it. How he conducted himself, and the impact that had on so many of us, will long benefit ag.”

—Joel Jaeger, president, Pro Farmer

“Ron was one of those people whose word was their bond. He was all about what’s right with this agricultural industry—and he was always looking to the future, without ignoring the present.” —Andy Weber, CEO, Farm Journal

