Keep Agriculture #1—this was the theme of the 57th National FFA Convention, the largest youth convention in the nation. What a convention it was. Anytime 21,524 people come together wearing the FFA's blue and gold jackets only great things can happen. All of us spent a very wonderful week in Kansas City hearing speeches from some of the best in the country and seeing awards being presented to the best in each area. It was a week full of learning and excitement.

Soon after arriving in Kansas City on Tuesday morning, our delegates Lamar White, Norman Mason, and Jack Brewer became busy with delegate and committee orientation meetings.

Wednesday morning came much too early for those of us who did not get into bed until late the previous night. However, once up the day moved very fast for all of us. For Lamar, Norman, and Jack the day was especially busy. They were assigned to various delegate committees. Lamar served as chairman of the National Future Farmer Magazine Committee. Norman was on the National Leadership Committee. Jack served as secretary to the National Leadership Committee.

The Courtesy Corps members attended an organizational meeting and received their duties for the coming three days. Also, this was the day for all of the teams and individuals to receive final instructions for their respective contests.

By Wednesday afternoon, about 18,000 people had arrived for the convention. As can be imagined, the hotels were filled to the brim with young people wearing blue and gold jackets. During meal times, all of the restaurants were busy serving FFA members from each of the fifty states and Puerto Rico. Also each morning there was a mad rush to catch an elevator.

On Wednesday evening the Municipal Auditorium was filled to capacity for the vespers program. The vespers put all in attendance in a mood of appreciation for the freedom that we enjoy in this country—the freedom so many other countries wish to have.

On Thursday the day started out great due to a very impressive opening ceremony performed by the National Officers. During the first session, we witnessed the premiere of the new public service announcement featuring actor Eddie Albert and the "Be All You Can Dream" theme audio visual. Also we heard the retiring address of the National Secretary. Four chapters received the National Chapter Safety Awards during this time. They were the Scottsboro, Daleville, Douglas, and Crossville FFA Chapters. Our last speaker for that session was sportscaster Pat Summerall.

Thursday afternoon the National Extemporaneous Public Speaking Contest was held, and the retiring address of the Western Region Vice President was given. Also, we heard an outstanding speech by Art Linkletter. During this time, the Dale County, Scottsboro, Crossville, Douglas, Ider and Daleville FFA Chapters received the National Chapter Award.

During the Thursday night session, the National Officer Candidates were introduced, including Robert Weaver, from the Falkville FFA Chapter. We applauded the financial support of the sponsors to the National FFA Foundation. Also after the massing of the state flags, we witnessed the "Stars Over America" pageant.

With Friday morning came the excellent retiring addressing of Southern Region Vice President, Chuck Duggar. The Honorary American Farmer Degree was bestowed on three very deserving individuals—Mrs. Betty Wright from Auburn; Mr. R. L. Reynolds, from Opp, and Mr. C. C. Martin from Enterprise. We were treated to a stirring presentation of the life of John Wayne given by impressionist John Wain.

During the fifth session Friday morning, the Central Region Vice President gave her retiring address, and the FFA Alumni Awards were presented. Next, we heard two enjoyable addresses from the Honorable Elizabeth Dole, Secretary of Transportation, and Senator Robert Dole, a husband and wife team. Also, during this time 13 American Farmer Degrees were awarded the recipients from Alabama.

Later that night, the state officers and the chapter officers attended a banquet. The guest speaker was Charlie Plumb, a POW for five years. His address was very inspiring.

The National Prepared Public Speaking Contest was also held on Friday night. Also, we were very proud of Marty Wootten, from the Ider Chapter, who was the national winner in the Soil and Water Management Proficiency contest.

Saturday morning was the day that the various contest awards were announced. Alabama's five teams waited with much anticipation. In this session, we were given a very motivational and interesting address by Mrs. Mamie McCullough. We heard the retiring address of the Eastern Region Vice President. Then, perhaps the most anticipated event of the convention, the report and recommendations of the nominating committee. This was a very thrilling time for all of us, because the excitement of the newly elected National Officers could be felt throughout the auditorium.

Saturday was FFA Day at the American Royal. Country music star Mickey Gilley entertained during the show.

It was hard to believe that Saturday night was already upon us. The closing ceremony was near. We relived the thrill of the 1984 Summer Olympics as Bart Conner performed and gave a summary of his experiences in winning his gold medal.

Next, we heard the retiring address of Ron Wineinger, National President. After the new National Officers were installed, the 57th National FFA Convention ended.

On Sunday morning, as we were preparing to leave, it was extremely hard not to reflect upon a week of great enjoyment and music, provided by the National Band and National Chorus, of which Mary Pace, of Scottsboro, was a member. We arrived in Montgomery late that afternoon. The friendship and love that grew between us that week will keep us together no matter how many miles may separate us.
National Soil and Water Management Award Winner is Marty Wootten, of the Ider FFA Chapter. Marty is shown here with William S. Owens, of the Ford Motor Company Fund. Marty's parents are Mr. and Mrs. Levon Wootten, and his FFA advisor at Ider High School is Jasper Wagner.

Mrs. Betty Wright, a dedicated member of the State Staff, received the Honorary American Farmer Degree at the National Convention. Shown congratulating Mrs. Wright is C. W. Reed, State FFA Advisor and State Specialist, Agribusiness Education.

The American Farmer Degree Recipients who attended the National Convention were: (front row, l-r) Chris Flynn, Ider; Todd McLaughlin, Scottsboro; Kyle Tharpe, Dale County; Patrick Tucker, Kate Duncan Smith DAR; Robert Weaver, Falkville; Tab Garrison, Mt. Hope (back row, l-r) William Birdsong, Geneva County; Johnny Brunson, Enterprises; McConnell Murphy, Gaylesville; Daniel Hipp, Cullman Co. AVTC, and Kevin Murphy, Foley.

The National Chapter Award Winners were (l-r) Mike Casey, Dale Co.; Gerald Towns and Bruce Jones, Douglas; Wesley Hardman, Scottsboro; Chris Gary, Crossville; Kim Pace, Scottsboro, Jeff Smith, Ider; Alan Waters and Jeff Boutwell, Daleville.

Honorary American Farmers

Shown are (left) Rod L. Reynolds, Opp High School, and (right) Curtis C. Martin, Enterprise High School, following the awarding of their Honorary American Farmer Degrees. Pictured with these dedicated teachers of agribusiness education is State FFA Advisor, C. W. Reed.
The Douglas FFA Chapter represented Alabama in the Agricultural Mechan­ics Contest. Representing the sponsor, Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, is Eugene Van Auker (left). Team members are (l-r) Chris Lauderdale, David Musick, Randy Eblen, Gerald Towns, and advisor Larry Wilson.

The G. W. Long FFA Chapter represented Alabama in the Livestock Judging Contest. Representing the sponsor,Ralston Purina Company, is Don Mauery (left). Team members are (l-r) Tim Tew, Ashley Childers, Mel Monk, and Bob Moorehead, advisor.

The White Plains FFA Chapter represented Alabama in the Dairy Judging Contest. Representing the sponsor, Associated Milk Producers, is Howard Jacobson. Team members are (l-r) Laura Morrison, John Chisolm, Raymond Lambert, and advisor, James Stiefel.

The Wetumpka FFA Chapter represented Alabama in the National Nursery­/Landscape Contest. Representing the sponsor, American Association of Nur­serymen, is Ms. Kerry A. McCoy. Team members are (l-r) Sonia Hosek, Dusty Lee, Lynn Macon, and advisor, Joe Brown.

The Opelika FFA Chapter represented Alabama in the Floriculture Contest. The team is shown with Les Thompson, U.S. Department of Education. Team members are (l-r) David Sweatman, Ricky Herrick, Selwyn Spratling, and Jerry Williamson, advisor.

Two chapters receiving national recognition in the BOAC Award Program were Daleville and Dale County. Shown representing these chapters are (l-r) Mike Casey, Advisor, and Phillip Cherry, Dale County, and Kenneth Helms, and Alan Waters, Daleville.

The 1984-85 State Officers had a very exciting week in K.C. Shown are (l-r) Maury Minton, Jack Brewer, Waller Martin, Norman Mason, Lamar White and Denise Smith.

The Douglas FFA Chapter received special recognition in the National BOAC Award Program and the National Safety Award Program. Shown representing the Douglas Chapter are Randy Eblen and Chris Lauderdale.
The Scottsboro FFA Chapter received national recognition in the National Safety Award Program. Shown representing the sponsors are (left) Howard Brenneman, Heston Corporation, and (right) Joseph Downey, Dow Chemical Company. Chapter representatives are Kim Pace and Wesley Hardman, advisor.

The Daleville FFA Chapter received national recognition in the National Safety Award Program. Shown representing the sponsors are (left) Howard Brenneman, Heston Corporation, and (right) Joseph Downey, Dow Chemical Company. Chapter representatives are Marley Deloney and advisor, Alan Waters.

CONVENTION REFLECTIONS