As I reminisce of the past and think of what the future holds, I am deeply touched and extremely proud to be an American. Each participant in the opening pageant of the 60th National FFA Convention seemed to have been as sincere as the writers of the Constitution of the United States. It has been said time and time again that this generation is "going to the dogs," and I suppose some of us may have reason to feel that way when we see the kind of examples we adults are setting. The FFA boys and girls from throughout the length and breadth of the United States were there, and they really performed as I had expected. I also realize a good agribusiness teacher can be an asset to his students. As I look in retrospect to my years as an agribusiness teacher, it strengthens my confidence in the future generation which in a few years will be holding the destiny of my life in their decision-making process, and I feel rather confident my future will be in good hands.

Riding in from the air terminal to the hotel, I saw a sign that read, "Kansas City is our home, we can make it." This to me set the tone for the FFA Convention. I could not help reflecting on the FFA Creed, the third and fourth paragraphs which read:

"I believe in leadership from ourselves and respect from others. I believe in my own ability to work efficiently and think clearly, with such knowledge and skill as I can secure, and in the ability of progressive agriculturists to serve our own and public interest in producing and marketing the product of our toil. I believe in less dependence on begging and more power in bargaining; in life abundant and enough honest wealth to help make it so—for others as well as myself; in less need for charity and playing square with those whose happiness depends upon me."

Kansas City is an ideal place to host the National FFA Convention. It is almost in the center of the United States and with the merging of interstate highways, large hotels, and an auditorium of the magnitude to seat over twenty thousand makes Kansas City an ideal location for hosting the National FFA Convention.

The theme for the 60th National Convention was ideal and had an abundance of wealth for thought, "Agriculture's New Spirit." As I tried to fathom through the relevance of the theme, I thought of the speeches by Lee Iacocca and Roger Staubach. The spirit runs from the rugged shores of Maine to Florida to the cavernous mountains of the state of Washington touching each state and village in between with the same message—if you are willing to pay the price, there is nothing one cannot obtain. Both speakers stressed high self-esteem, love and compassion for others and a willingness to be the best. I always emphasized to my students—never let anything or anybody stand between you and success. The only place you find success before work is in the dictionary.

The late Dr. T. L. Faulkner, Director of Vocational Education in Alabama, sent us some materials entitled, "Agriculture is More than Farming." As I looked at twenty thousand plus blue and gold FFA jackets, that really brought home to me the aims and purposes of FFA. Just to mention a few: to develop competent and aggressive agricultural leadership; to develop character, train for useful citizenship, and foster patriotism; to encourage improvement in scholarship and encourage and practice thrift—all of which are the making of a worthy man or woman.

My life will never be the same. After attending my first National Convention, I know each teacher of agribusiness owes it to himself and his students to make a trip to Kansas City. I will have a deeper appreciation and a greater love for the boys and girls who wear the blue and gold and participate in FFA activities. I know the legacy we leave will be a lasting one.

ABOUT SOCRATES HARPER

Mr. Harper is a retired teacher of agribusiness education. A native of Tuscaloosa County, he is a graduate of Tuscaloosa County Training School in Northport. He earned his BS and Master's Degree from Tuskegee Institute and has done graduate study at Auburn University.

Harper taught agribusiness education in Macon County for 33 years—12 at Prairie Farms and 21 at D.C. Wolfe. He was very active in professional organizations while teaching. During 1979-80, he served as president of the AVATA. He is the recipient of the H.O. Sergeant Award and the Honorary State Farmer Degree. During the recent National Convention, he received the Honorary American Farmer Degree.

Since his retirement, Harper has been active in church and community activities. Presently he is serving on the Macon County Commission as the Commissioner from District III. He is a cattle farmer and enjoys hunting and horseback riding.

Harper and his wife, the former Consuello Jenkins Harper, reside in the Shorter Community. They have two children—a son Justin and a daughter Sylvia.
ALABAMA'S JAYME FEARY had an outstanding year going "From Fears to Glory Tears." Jayme, a member of the Falkville FFA Chapter, who served as Southern Regional National Vice President, traveled over 200,000 miles during his year of service to the FFA. Please see a copy of the National Convention Proceedings for the text of his retiring address entitled "From Fears to Glory Tears." In January, Jayme will return to Auburn University to continue his education.

REGIONAL WINNERS — — —

AGRICULTURAL SALES AND/OR SERVICE — Kerry McLaney, member of the Geneva FFA Chapter, was one of four regional winners competing for the title of 1987 National Agricultural Sales and/or Service Winner. Kerry is pictured with Gary Walters, Vice President, Sales, Babson Bros., and Jeff Brazo, Assistant Executive Director of the National FFA Foundation representing ICI Americas Inc., and General Motors Corporation, sponsors of the Agricultural Sales and/or Service Proficiency Award program. Kerry's FFA advisor at Geneva is J. L. Parish.

DIVERSIFIED CROP PRODUCTION — Chad Hodges, member of the Ardmore FFA Chapter, was one of four winners competing for the title of 1987 National Diversified Crop Production Winner. Hodges is pictured with Jim Harding, Administrative Manager, Cargill Incorporated, sponsor of the National FFA Diversified Crop Production Proficiency Award program. Advisor to the Ardmore FFA Chapter is Joe McKay.

FOREST MANAGEMENT — Larry Williams, member of the Tanner "A" FFA Chapter was one of four regional winners competing for the title of 1987 National Forest Management Winner. Larry is pictured with Tom Clonts, General Manager, Woodlands Management, Stone Container Corporation, sponsors of the National FFA Forest Management Proficiency Award Program. Larry's advisor is David Wilbanks.

FRUIT AND/OR VEGETABLE PRODUCTION — Brian Pullen, member of the Boaz FFA Chapter, was one of four regional winners competing for the title of 1987 National Fruit and/or Vegetable Production Winner. Brian is pictured with Jeff Brazo, Assistant Executive Director, National FFA Foundation, representing Briggs & Stratton Corporation Foundation, Inc., sponsor of the program. Advisor to Brian at Boaz High School is Marion Jackson.

SWINE PRODUCTION — Bryan Romine, member of the Rogersville FFA Chapter, was one of four regional winners competing for the title of 1987 National Swine Production Winner. Bryan is pictured with Jan Westmoreland, Director of Public Affairs, Pfizer, Inc., Agricultural Division, sponsor of the National FFA Swine Production Award program. Bryan's FFA advisor at Lauderdale County High School is Ross Smith.
ALABAMA'S "BLUE & GOLD" RECEIVE NATIONAL RECOGNITION

THE J. B. PENNINGTON AGRICULTURAL MECHANICS TEAM was Alabama's entry in the National FFA Ag Mechanics Contest. Representing the sponsor, the Firestone Trust Fund, is (left) Larry Jensen. Team members are (l-r) Bryan Aaron, Clay Dunn, Danny Clem, Barry Davis, and FFA Advisor R. Donald Jones. This team placed 12 out of 44 teams and won a silver emblem award.

THE HOUSTON COUNTY FFA DAIRY JUDGING TEAM was the state's representative in the National Dairy Contest. Shown representing the sponsor, Associated Milk Producers, is Harlan Urban. Team members are (l-r) Tom Freeman, Michael Chadwick, Tahl Pierce, Randy Cooley and FFA advisor Joe Rasberry. The team finished 34 out of 44 teams and were a bronze emblem winner.

THE OPELKA FFA FLORICULTURE TEAM represented Alabama in the National Floriculture Contest. Shown representing the sponsor, the National FFA Foundation, is Doug Butler. Team members are (l-r) Sandra Davis, Derek Kellum, Robert Simpkins, Mitch England, and FFA Advisor Jerry Williamson. The team finished 6th out of 40 teams and won a gold emblem award.

THE WOODLAND NURSERY/LANDSCAPE JUDGING TEAM competed in the National Contest during the National Convention in Kansas City. Representing the sponsors, Kubota Tractor Corp., American Association of Nurserymen, Inc. and Cotter and Company are (l-r) Mike Broeker, Maureen Nichols, and Lyle Cordle. Team members are Sally Spratlin, Patricia Knight, Daniel Knight and FFA Advisor Hewell Bishop. The team placed 12th out of 42 and received a silver emblem award.

THE AMERICAN FARMER DEGREE RECIPIENTS attending the National Convention were (l-r) Allan Mark Hill, Skyline; Greg Dalton, Ider; Jody Brewer, Citronelle "Blue"; Chad Hodges, Ardmore; John Aplin, Slocomb; Bryan Romine, Rogersville; Max Murphy, Gaylesville; Jesse Horner, Smith Station "C"; Mark Patton, Berry; Mel Monk, G. W. Long; Bill Thompson, W. S. Neal; Kerry McLaney, Geneva, and Chris Sims, Clements.

THE W. S. NEAL FFA FORESTRY JUDGING TEAM was Alabama's entry in the National FFA Forestry Contest. Representing the sponsor, Homelite Division of Textron, Inc., is Robert Bonine. Team members are (l-r) Charles Nelson, Ricky Dubose, Jason Thompson, Steve Lamkin and FFA advisor Phillip Ellis. This team placed 14th out of 26 and received a silver emblem plaque award.

THE DALE COUNTY FFA LIVESTOCK JUDGING TEAM was the state's entry in the National Livestock Contest. Representing the sponsor, Purina Mills, Inc., is Don R. Mauer. Team members are (l-r) Dwayne Stevens, Jason Everette, Mason Adams, Eric Andrews and FFA Advisor Mike Casey. The team placed 28th out of 46 and won a bronze award.

SUPERIOR CHAPTER AWARD — The Marbury FFA Chapter was the first place winner in Alabama for the Superior Chapter Award. At the National Convention, they received a Silver Award. Chapter members accepting the award are James Lucas and Lowell Strock. Their FFA advisor at Marbury is Mike Tidwell.
CHAPTERS AND ADVISORS RECEIVE RECOGNITION

SUPERIOR CHAPTER AWARDS received were (l-r) Mike England, Crossville; Jeff Wootten, Ider; John Toole, Dale County; Donna Jordan, Scottsboro; Scott Hancock, Ider; Gene Hancock, G. W. Long, and Shane Black, Clements Chapter accepting for the Ardmore Chapter.

CHAPTER SAFETY AWARD WINNERS (l-r) Ronald Gatlin, Tim McAlaster, West Limestone; Chris Etheredge, Tracey Deloney, Daleville; Jared Forrester, Houston County, and Mike England, Crossville.

BOAC AWARD WINNERS (l-r) Jason Trammell, G. W. Long; Jeff Wootten, Chris Carroll, Ider; Sandra Davis, Paul Willis, Opelika, and David Pitchford, Houston County.

HONORARY AMERICAN FARMER DEGREE RECIPIENTS (l-r) Curtis Eiland, Louisville; Lowell Carter, Troy; Wesley Hardman, Scottsboro, and Willis Bell, Red Level.

NATIONAL CHORUS — Lisa Peavy, member of the Uriah FFA Chapter at J.U. Blacksher High School, was a member of the National Chorus. Her advisor is Danny McGhee.

NATIONAL BAND MEMBERS — Kristy Evans, Kate Duncan Smith FFA Chapter; Cindy Hankey, Fairview FFA Chapter, and Tony Payne, also of the Kate Duncan Smith Chapter, were Alabama's representatives in the National Band.

1987 STATE AGRICULTURE TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD — Van Smith, (center) teacher of agribusiness education at Selma High School, was recognized at the 60th National FFA Convention in Kansas City as the State Agriscience Teacher of the Year winner of Alabama. Smith was honored for preparing his students for the high-tech career opportunities in today's modern agriculture industry. The Agriscience Teacher of the Year award is sponsored by ICI Americas Inc. of Wilmington, Delaware, as a Special Project of the National FFA Foundation.

THE WEST POINT STRING BAND participated in the Talent Show and played at various functions during the Convention. Members of the band are: Chris Campbell, Mike Johnson, Scott McCormick and Waylon Campbell. Their FFA advisor at West Point is Gary Wilhite.