

# Richard “Dick” Stuart Sechrist

May 2, 1927 - March 11, 2021

Mount Vernon, Ohio - Formerly of Sunbury, Ohio

Richard S. “Dick” Sechrist, age 93, of Mt. Vernon and Sunbury, Ohio, died Thursday, March 11, 2021 after fighting the good fight against old age. Dick was born in Garrettsville, Ohio, oldest of four boys, to the late Jacob Stuart and Thelma Rice Sechrist. He was graduated from Garrettsville High School, joined the U.S. Navy, rose to Seaman 1st Class and Storekeeper 3rd Class, and returned after WWII to complete bachelor degrees in Biology and Dairy Science from Hiram College and OSU, and a masters in Dairy Science Physiology from University of Nebraska. He also did work toward a Ph. D. in Rural Sociology at OSU. He began a family with wife Janet (Marie Williams) and operated Eaglebrook Farm (Garrettsville)—the Sechrist Guernsey herd—taught school, and drove a schoolbus to make ends meet. He entered the business side of dairy farming in the early 1960s and built a career that progressed from Field Supervisor for Central Ohio Breeding Association, to OSU Dairy Extension Specialist, to General Manager of Ohio Ag Services, Inc. (DHI, Inc.). His career brought him to central Ohio, where most of his working life was based.



As the first Executive Secretary of Ohio Ag in the 1970s, he oversaw the development and centralization of services for dairy farmers, including the still-new concept of computerized herd management, a decade before personal computers became common. His innovative approach shaped the organization into a leader in the dairy herd management and records industry. He then became Executive Secretary of National Dairy Herd Improvement Association, Inc., where he provided leadership and vision to 50 state organizations. His focus on DHIA business management training, technology, quality control, dairy industry research, and communication grew the organization at an unprecedented rate.

He was a natural-born leader, especially known for his business development, management, and communication skills. He became a sought-after expert, speaker, and contributor to national agricultural publications, including Dairy Magazine.

His wife Janet died of lung cancer in 1981. Dick was married to Dorothy (Swisher Stumpf) in 1982. In 1987 they bought Locust Springs Farms outside Mt. Vernon, OH, and in their “retirement” began raising sheep. The flock grew to more than 200 ewes, and motorists on Rte. 229 west of Mt. Vernon enjoyed the sight of lambs playing king of the mountain in the barnyard near the road.

For transforming from row-crop farming to grass pasture and alfalfa hay, his farm was named an Ohio’s Country Journal Environmental Steward Winner in 2006. Dick was honored with the National DHIA Outstanding Service Award in 2015.

After Dorothy’s passing in 2006, he began to be troubled by heart and lung issues but kept farming, eventually bringing on partners Rick Graumlich and Steve Hite. Fifteen years later, Dick was still actively maintaining his 120-acre farm, mowing up to 5 acres every week in the final summer of his life. He proudly represented WWII vets in Sunbury parades.

Dick was a big believer in professional and community service. His contributions included: Director, United States Animal Health Association; National Industry-State Agricultural Research Council; Advisor, International Stockmen’s School; Steering Committee and Secretary, Forum for Animal Agriculture; American Dairy Science Association; Ohio State University Dairy Science Advisory Committee; Gamma Sigma Delta Honor Society of Agriculture; President and Trustee, Sunbury Community Library; President, Sunbury Lions Club; Administrative Board Chairman, Sunbury United Methodist Church; President, Delaware County Dollars for

Scholars; alumni associations, and various other professional and community organizations.

In addition to his parents and wives, Janet and Dorothy, Dick was also preceded in death by his brother, Robert (Sigred) Sechrist. He is survived by children, David (Jan) Sechrist of Antelope, CA, Nancy (Roger) Williams of Colville, WA, Laura (Scott) Sommers of Granville and Daniel (Rebecca) Sechrist of Whitehouse, OH; brothers, Tom (Paula) Sechrist of Bloomington, IN and Paul (Pat) Sechrist of Chesterton, IL; stepchildren, Rita (Jeff) Duncan of Los Angeles, Jennifer Clark of Los Angeles, and Linda (Jeff) Lentz of Indonesia; son-in-law, Jeff Clark of Lakewood; ten grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren; many nieces and nephews and long-time friends.

Dick was highly regarded as a man of science, reason, and discipline. He always believed his accomplishments, contributions, principles, and the family and friends he touched would speak to the kind of life he lived. He was never boastful, but one of his proudest community achievements was leading the Sunbury UMC committee that erected the church at the corner of Rts. 3 and 37. He will be missed, mightily, for his independent streak, strong opinions, and dry sense of humor, but his impact will continue to be felt for generations.

He loved Locust Springs Farms and his gentlemen-farmer existence. The farm was his home for more than 30 years and he will now be returned to the earth that sustained him and his loved ones. Due to COVID concerns, Dick will be interred with a private graveside service in Sunbury Memorial Park, with no visiting. A larger memorial service will be planned for late summer or early fall.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to: Hiram College Development Office, P.O. Box 67, Hiram, OH 44234 (330-298-5790, [hiram.edu](http://hiram.edu)), Sunbury United Methodist Church, 100 W. Cherry Street, Sunbury, OH 43074 (740-965-3813, [sunburyumc.org](http://sunburyumc.org)), or the Community Library of Sunbury, 44 Burrer Drive, Sunbury, OH 43074 (740-965-3901, [yourcl.org](http://yourcl.org)) in Dick's memory.

The Devore-Snyder Funeral Home of Sunbury is honored to serve the Sechrist family. Please share a memory or condolence with the family on this website.