

Dickson Ward Parsons



D.W. Parsons was an ardent believer in agriculture and its importance to the economy of West Virginia. Through his efforts in agricultural extension and agricultural education, his influence reached practically every rural community in the state. His expertise as a teacher and Extension Agent were well known.

Dr. Parsons began his career as principal and Superintendent of Schools in Kingwood in 1915. He later became Country Agriculture Agent in Lewis County, was principal and vocational agriculture teacher at Shinnston High School, and became Acting State Supervisor of Vocational Agriculture in 1923. He studied at Cornell University, where he was awarded with his doctor's degree and came to West Virginia University in 1929 as a member of the Agricultural Education Department. He served as Chairman of the Department from 1933 until his retirement in 1951.

Dr. Parsons was a believer in the importance of professional organizations and was a member of the American Vocational Association, the West Virginia Vocational Association, the West Virginia Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association, and the National Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association. He was a member of the Phi Delta Kappa, professional education honorary, and an honorary member of Alpha Zeta, agriculture honorary.

Highly dedicated to his work, Dr. Parsons' primary contribution to West Virginia agriculture was through the vocational agriculture programs. He worked with all teachers of vocational agriculture individually and collectively with thousands of youth and adults through vocational agriculture, adult farmer classes, young farmer classes, and the Future Farmers of America. He was an early supporter of rural electrification and promoted modernization of farm and home equipment.

Dr. Parsons was an educator who demonstrated his interest in the individual. He has a genuine interest in the vocational agriculture teacher and his family. He was a conservationist and encouraged plantings for game food and shelter. A colleague reported that Dr. Parsons could sum up what took place in a meeting in fewer words and less time than anyone else. The vocational agriculture teachers remember him as a considerate, but tough person, who instinctively knew how to deal with those whom he supervised.