

The genuine kindness of native Nebraskan Gary Scharf is imprinted on all those who knew him and have come to know him since his death in December 2007, a victim of an Omaha mall-shooting.

Scharf's uncommon zeal for helping others will soon be honored by the Nebraska FFA Foundation with the "Gary Scharf Helping Hand Award."

The newly established award, to be presented for the first time at the Nebraska FFA Convention in April, will annually recognize a Nebraska agricultural instructor/FFA advisor who personifies school and community citizenship and service—going above and beyond.

Scharf grew up on a family farm outside of Curtis and worked in the agricultural chemical industry. He made significant contributions to Nebraska's agricultural and FFA community through his years of service on the Nebraska FFA Foundation Board, including a year as Board president in 2002-03.

Those who served with him recall that he was genuinely interested in people and always willing to help; two attributes that greatly benefited the FFA Foundation as the private fundraising arm for programs that support young men and women enrolled in Nebraska FFA programs.

According to Nebraska FFA Foundation Executive Director, Tammy Meyer, Scharf led by example and his legacy of service will not be forgotten.

"I did not have the honor of meeting Gary, but everyone who knew him speaks about his commitment to helping others and being involved beyond the workplace," said Meyer.

"We felt this award was an appropriate way to keep his legacy alive while recognizing those agriculture teachers who contribute so much to their schools and communities outside of agricultural education and FFA," she said.

In order to be considered for the award, agriculture teachers can be nominated by students, colleagues, school officials, parents or others in the community. Nomination applications can be downloaded from the Nebraska FFA Foundation website at www.neffafoundation.org, or by sending an email to information@neffafoundation.org. Applications will be accepted through March 20.

The award presentation will be made on Thursday, April 2, during the evening session of the Nebraska State FFA Convention in Lincoln. The winning agriculture teacher will be recognized with a plaque and \$500 cash award.