



BIOGRAPHY

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FARM SERVICE AGENCY

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Bob Etheridge

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Bob Etheridge was born in Sampson County, North Carolina but spent all of his school-age years in Johnston County. He attended Cleveland School, a union school that housed grades K-12. He graduated with the class of 1959. The son of tenant farmers, Etheridge worked for two years after high school graduation saving enough money to enter Campbell College.

In 1978, Etheridge was elected to the N.C. House of Representatives and served as chairman of the House Appropriations Committee from 1984-1988. He introduced the Basic Education Plan, which focused on providing millions of dollars to the public school budget for North Carolina and establishing a core curriculum for all students in K-12, in both rural and urban areas of the State. In 1988, Etheridge was elected as State Superintendent of Public Instruction, becoming the first non-educator since 1856 to hold that post. In eight years as superintendent, Etheridge quickly cut the state bureaucracy in the Department of Public Instruction by 25% and instituted an accountability system that has greatly improved student test scores. In 1996, Etheridge was elected to Congress from N.C.'s second district. He served fourteen years in Congress where he served for twelve years on the House Agriculture Committee and as Chairman of the General Farm Commodity and Risk Management Subcommittee for two years. Etheridge then moved to the House Ways and Means Committee for two years, the first North Carolinian to serve on that committee for 60 years.

In the spring of 2011, Etheridge was appointed by Gov. Beverly Purdue to monitor federal stimulus recovery funding. Following a devastating tornado in central NC and a devastating hurricane in eastern North Carolina, he was asked to identify and secure funding for the victims of those natural disasters. Four institutions of higher learning have conferred honorary doctor degrees to Etheridge: Campbell University, Fayetteville State University, Pfeiffer College and Shaw University. He is also a member of the Campbell Sports Hall of Fame and the Johnston County Sports Hall of Fame.

Etheridge and his wife, Faye, have been married for 48 years and have three children and eight grandchildren. Bob is an active member of Leaflet Presbyterian Church where he is an elder, president of the Presbyterian men and a long-time Sunday school teacher. Bob still spends as much time as he can on the family farm where he has beef cattle.