



The 2024-2025 Gary Hemphill “Spirit of NIFA” Award

The “Spirit of NIFA” Award was established in 2021 in honor of the late Gary Hemphill. Gary’s NIFA involvement began in 1978 as a student in Region IV. He humbly volunteered as SAFECON support, host school advisor at Northeast Louisiana University (NLU), and as Region IV representative. Gary served in the U.S. Air Force and later completed his Master’s Degree at NLU, where he also taught and coached. From 1985-2011 he guided the organization as Executive Director of NIFA, while also spending his career as an Aviation Professor, Department Chair, and Flight Team Advisor at Delta State University. Not only did Gary carry NIFA on his shoulders and in his heart for over 26 years, but without him NIFA would not be where it is today. In 2011, NIFA awarded Gary its highest honor, the Founder’s Award, for his dedication and service to the organization. There have been only 10 recipients of this award in NIFA history. NIFA owes Gary much more than this award. NIFA owes its future to Gary.



The Gary Hemphill “Spirit of NIFA” Award will be presented to a person who exemplifies the same passion toward humbly serving others, while leading a life of dedication and commitment to excellence for future generations.

The 2025 Award will be in the amount of \$5,000.

Eligibility

Applicants for this award must meet the following criteria:

- Be enrolled in a current NIFA Member School during the 2024-2025 academic year
- Be, or have been, an active member on the school’s NIFA Flight Team

Application Process

- Carefully read the Application Criteria document
- Prepare all required items prior to opening the application - the application must be completed in one sitting and is not saveable for future edits/additions
- Students should use time during the current Regionals’ season, and Spring practice season, to prepare their videos and other content
- **The application window will OPEN on January 8, 2025.**
When ready, fill out the application via the link provided on this date
- **The application window will CLOSE on April 12, 2025.**
- Questions regarding the Award may be directed to taylor.newman@nifa.aero

Award Process

- The NIFA Award Committee will review applications and contact applicants with any questions
- The winner will be notified prior to the 2025 National SAFECON
- The winner will be announced on the NIFA website and social media platforms
- The winner will be recognized at the SAFECON 2025 Awards Banquet