

Dedicated farm leader

Kenneth Ralph James, OAM

Farming leader

Born: January 8, 1916; Adelaide

Died: April 26, 2004; Lucindale

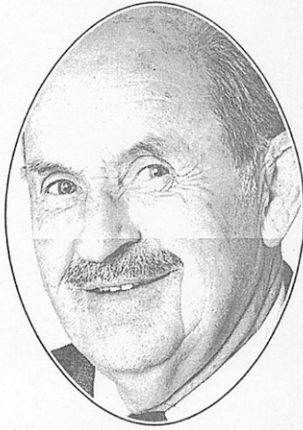
FEW people have played a more important role in South Australian farming organisations than Ralph James. He was a central player in both national and state agri-politics for many years, earning an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) for services to Australia's primary industry in 1985.

He was one of the state's most eminent and respected farm leaders and first president of the United Farmers and Stockowners (a forerunner of the SA Farmers Federation).

A farmer from Lucindale, Mr James will be remembered with great respect for his dedication to issues affecting the state's farmers, and his willingness to fight on their behalf on state and national levels.

With a considerable list of achievements, Mr James was prodigious in agri-politics in the 1970s.

He was a member of the National Farmers Federation Council and many other peak industry bodies that operated on a federal level, including the Australian Meat and Livestock Council and the National Rural Advisory Council (NRAC). Mr James



was president of the Australian Sheepmeat Council. He also served in many other roles for state farm organisations.

Mr James made an outstanding contribution to the Lucindale town as a member of the Lucindale District Council for 22 years, including eight years as chairman, and he served on the Lucindale Area School council for more than 20 years. He was instrumental in the formation of the Lucindale Country Club and made possible the Lucindale Health Centre and was a key contributor to the South-East Drainage Scheme. He was chairman of the South-East Fire Fighting Association and fire control officer for 30 years.

In 1979, Mr James oversaw the merging of the Stockowners Association with the United Farmers and Graziers and became the first elected president of the new organisation. Named the United Farmers and Stockowners Association, the united front for the farming industry eventually became the SA Farmers Federation.

He was instrumental in highlighting the injustices caused by death and succession-duty taxes on farmers in Australia, eventually leading to their abolishment. In 1987, he was awarded life membership of the United Farmers and Stockowners of SA.

A man of immense energy, ability and wit, Mr James retired from farming organisations in the late 1980s and spent more time with his wife, Nancy, on the family property at Lucindale.

A remarkable man who set the bar for future farm leaders with his relentless drive for the rights of those on the land, he is survived by a son, Ian, and daughters Pat, Betty and Barbara.

Nigel Austin