

Bobbie Foust's Bio for Kentucky Lake Chamber of Commerce's 2020 Lifetime Achievement Award

Bobbie Foust, the 2020 Kentucky Lake Chamber of Commerce's Lifetime Achievement Awardee grew up on her ancestral homeplace — a farm on Needmore Road halfway between Palma and Lone Valley. She acquired her early education at the one-room Howard's Grove School, and as a fifth grader, transferred to Palma's two-room school.

Roberta Avagene "Bobbie" Freeman Foust graduated from Calvert City High School in 1952 after which she took what was known as "a business course" — typing, shorthand, business English, math, and public relations designed to protect the boss— at Falls Junior College in Nashville, Tennessee. Her uncle, Ed Freeman, was managing editor at The Tennessean, one of two Nashville, Tennessee daily newspapers. When Bobbie was a child, Ed bragged that his eldest niece would graduate from the University of Missouri's College of Journalism and become a well-known newspaperwoman. Missouri's J-School was, and still is, one of the nation's best.

"Maybe my uncle planted that ambition in my mind, I'll never know. I didn't go to Mizzou," Foust said. Instead, she fell in love with a Calvert City marine, Ray Foust Jr., married him, and settled down to rear a family. "I received further education in bits and pieces at Paducah Community College and Murray State University. I believe education is a continuing cradle-to-grave process.," she said.

Between 1956 and 1959, the Fousts were blessed with four children. Bobbie's job became a full-time mother and homemaker.

Her 54-year career in journalism began in 1961 when she worked a year from her home for old-time newspaperman Kerby Jennings at The Valley Sun, a Calvert City weekly Jennings started in 1952 when futurists were predicting Calvert's population would boom to 10,000 by 1960. It didn't happen and Jennings closed The Valley Sun in 1962.

By 1968, the Foust children were in school and Bobbie was looking for interesting work. Benton Tribune-Democrat owners Bill and Mayme Nelson had opened The Calvert News earlier that year. Bobbie noticed its office was often closed. So, she phoned Mayme and asked if she needed help. Mayme said she did and she would

pay Foust \$1 an hour and she could leave in time to pick up her children after school.

Bobbie had no idea she had embarked on a long-term career that would include 20 years in three stints at the Tribune Courier, two as its Editor; 16 years in two stints, one as Editor, at the Herald Ledger in Eddyville; a stint as Editor of the startup Marshall County Messenger and 7 years as a general news reporter at The Paducah Sun. Between jobs, she freelanced for regional newspapers and magazines, and since 2016 she has freelanced for The Paducah Sun, The Trib, the Herald Ledger, The Lake News, and other publications.

When she became Tribune Editor in 1980, one goal she achieved was to make it a National Blue Ribbon Newspaper, a designation of excellence prescribed by the National Newspaper Foundation. She also won countless awards from the Kentucky Press Association including for Freedom of Information, Community Service, news and sports reporting, writing, and photography.

During the 1980s, she consulted on two startup newspapers in other regions — News Scene in Madisonville, and The Cumberland Times in Eddyville.

Two of Bobbie's outside writing projects are a brief history of the City of Kuttawa titled "Kuttawa's Story Through 2017," commissioned by the Kuttawa Relocation Foundation, and a 2009 history of Kentucky Dam and Calvert City businessman Luther Draffen's role in having the dam located at Gilbertsville. She also wrote the script for her presentation to the Jackson Purchase Historical Society accompanied by a PowerPoint of old newspaper articles and photographs chronicling how the Kentucky Dam came into being. That same year, she also wrote the History of Haddox (Haydock's) Ferry and In 2021, she wrote a History of Calvert City for its Sesquicentennial Celebration.

Bobbie is a charter member and has served on the Calvert Community Advisory Team since its inception in 1992. The advisory team was created by industries in the Calvert City Industrial Complex. She also was a member of the industry's emergency planning committee, the group that preceded the advisory team, from 1987 to 1992. She is a member of the Lyon County Historical Society and the Gen. John Caldwell Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution in Princeton.

Her professional and civic activities include:

2021 She served on the Calvert City Sesquicentennial Committee and wrote a 10,800-word history of Calvert City.

2021 She was recognized by Sen. Mitch McConnell who read her article about the 75th anniversary of the Kentucky Dam into the Congressional Record.

In 2020 she received the Kentucky Lake Chamber of Commerce's Lifetime Achievement Award for her continued career as a journalist and her voluntarism.

In 2019, the Marshall County Democratic Party named her Democratic Woman of the Year.

2018 Bobbie served as public relations/spokesperson for the Marshall/Calloway Counties' March for Our Lives following the shooting at Marshall County High School.

In 1988, she chaired the Calvert City Homecoming '88 celebration.

In 1984 she was the county moderator of the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence's statewide forum.

Bobbie was elected to the Kentucky Press Association Board of Directors in 1984 and served through July 1987.

She was president of the Western Kentucky Press Association three times, in 1983, 1992, and 1999.

Bobbie was named to attend American Press Institute for Weekly Newspaper Editors in 1985.

She was president of the Kentucky Federation of Press Women from 1984-87.

She was a participant in the first Kentucky First Amendment Congress in 1986, at which ABC's Sander Vanocour and USA Today editorial page Editor John Seigenthaler spoke. Kentucky Federation of Press Women of which Bobbie was president, was among 17 sponsors.

In 1987, Gov. Martha Layne Collins appointed Bobbie to the Legislative Research Commission's Special Committee on Election Reform chaired by Livingston Taylor.

Some of the committee's recommendations were enacted by the General Assembly after the committee completed its work in 1988.

She was Kentucky Press Women's nominee for National Communicator of the Year in 1989.

She was a member of the Purchase Area Development District's Arts Panel from 1977-1982.

Bobbie served on the Calvert City Comprehensive Plan Committee and Tree City USA Committee in Mayor Hans Konrad's Administration, 1989-1996.

She lobbied every state legislator who would listen to support Sunshine Laws (Open Meetings/Open Records), passed in 1974 and '76 respectively.

She was president of the North Marshall Parent-Teacher Association 1972-73 (PTA, not PTO). The PTA was affiliated with the state and national PTA.

Bobbie was a member of Calvert City's All Kentucky City Committee, in 1970 and '71.

She was Publicity Chair of the Calvert City Centennial Committee, in 1971.

She taught Sunday School for adults and teens for 14 years in the 1960s and '70s.