

## Remembering the Legacy: Honoring Past Mississippi State Conservationists



### William L. Heard

Service: 1961-1976

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“W.L. Heard- man of many deeds,” describes *The Oxford Eagle* in August of 1982.

Mr. William L. Heard helped to establish and promote conservation in Mississippi for almost two decades. He served as Mississippi State Conservationist from 1961-1976.

Anders was born in Oxford, Miss. He attended the University of Mississippi and graduated with honors with a Bachelors of Arts degree in civil engineering in 1928.

He began his tenure with the Soil Conservation Service in 1935, where he served as Camp Superintendent, area

engineer, and area conservationist in Blue Mountain, Miss. Heard promoted the idea of cost-share assistance to farmers and established technical specifications for farm drainage. In the forties, Heard was involved with the Yazoo- Little Tallahatchie Flood Prevention Project. The project covered over 6 million acres of land in North Miss. and Heard oversaw conservation practices of annual flood and sediment damages in the area. In 1956, Heard was assigned as Deputy State Conservationist in Jackson, Miss. He assumed the position of State Conservationist in 1961.

As State Conservationist, Heard promoted conservation and assisted approximately 80,000 farmers through conservation programs. At the time of his retirement, the agency had provided technical assistance for 35,000 acres of water for catfish farms and provided better management of 400,000 areas of land in the Miss. delta.

Heard was a member of the National Task Force, the American Society of Civil Engineers, and the Soil Conservation Society of America. He received numerous accolades and recognition for his work in conservation, including a U.S. Congressional Concurrent Resolution in honor of his service.

Heard retired from the service on December 31, 1976. He was married to Marie Heard and to this union were two children. William L. Heard died on June 3, 1990.