

# COMMENCEMENT

1993 FALL SEMESTER

**MICHIGAN STATE**  

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**U N I V E R S I T Y**

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# HONORARY DEGREE

ELTON R. SMITH

Elton R. Smith, as a leading proponent of agricultural education and research, your distinguished career, spanning more than six decades, has had a profound impact on Michigan State University, the State of Michigan, and many nations throughout the world.

After studying agricultural technology at Michigan State University and starting with 120 acres of rented land, you became nationally renowned for your dairy herd and rose to the highest levels of agricultural organizations in the state and nation.

Your leadership capabilities were first recognized when you were named an officer in a neighborhood Farm Bureau Community Group, which led to your being elected to the Michigan Farm Bureau board of directors, to vice president, and then to president of the state's largest farm organization, a post you held for twenty-two years.

Nationally, your abilities were further recognized when you served four years as a vice president of the nation's largest farm organization, the American Farm Bureau Federation.

The global scope of your vision is exemplified by your involvement in trade missions to many countries including Japan, Russia, and Israel, as well as to the European Economic Community and to the Pacific Rim.

As an articulate spokesperson for agriculture, you have been recognized by your many appointments to committees, boards and commissions by U.S. presidents, Michigan governors, and their secretaries of agriculture.

The remarkable breadth of your interests is demonstrated by your active participation in farm policy, international trade, conservation, farm cooperatives and leadership development.

It was under your leadership that the Michigan Farm Bureau successfully lobbied for funds for the state's land-grant university to carry out its agricultural education and research mission.

Your unwavering trust in individuals to make right decisions and take the right action if given the proper information, training and opportunities was exemplified by your devotion and support of grassroots leadership. This was demonstrated when, as head of the organization, you personally visited and shared views with every county Farm Bureau president.

Awards and honors for your contributions to your industry are legion. For example, Michigan State University named you Dairyman of the year and awarded you Distinguished Service to Agriculture Award, and the Michigan State Horticultural Society honored you with its Distinguished Service Award. In lasting recognition of your contributions, the Michigan State University department of Agricultural Economics and the Michigan Farm Bureau honored you by the 1986 establishment of the Elton R. Smith Endowment Chair in Food and Agricultural Policy, a position recently filled by the nation's most distinguished scholars.

For your long-long contributions to agriculture and the improvement of human condition, and for your efforts on behalf of education and research, Michigan State University takes great pleasure in awarding you the honorary degree of Doctor of Agriculture.