



THOMAS BENJAMIN HAGLER
Alabama Agricultural Hall of Honor
1993

Dr. Ben Hagler was born May 16, 1913 in Louisville, Alabama. He graduated from Louisville High School and attended Berry College, prior to earning a B.S. degree from Auburn University. He also earned a master's degree from Auburn and the Ph.D. in horticulture from the University of Maryland.

Hagler taught agriculture at Beatrice High School and the Lee County High School in Auburn. In 1945, he began a 13-year stint as assistant, then associate horticulturist at Auburn University. In 1960, he returned to Auburn as chairman of the Plant Science Division of the Alabama Cooperative Extension Services (ACES), and in 1976 he became head of Extension horticulture, a position he held at Auburn until his retirement in 1981.

Hagler's lifelong fascination with agriculture began on the family's small farm in Barbour County, where he first learned to propagate pecans. During the depression, his family moved to Monroe County to run a family-owned cotton gin. During most of the depression years, he was unable to attend college, but seeing the destitute state of many of the farmers who brought cotton to his family's gin convinced him to find a way to learn how to help these people. After working his way through Berry College for two years, he earned a scholarship to Auburn, and despite his many successes in agriculture, he never lost sight of his mission to improve the plight of Alabama farmers.

In addition to his professional career, Hagler has been a state and national leader of Kiwanis International. He played a key role in developing Kiwanian's Farm-City Week, which promotes the interactive relationships between farmers and consumers. He was also instrumental in the development of the Garden Clubs of Alabama. His columns in "The Birmingham News", EnviroSouth, and other publications played a key role in increasing the visibility and viability of gardening as a hobby.

Hagler is married to the former Lucy Vinson. They have three children: Benjamin Lucien, Lucy Elizabeth, and William Albert Hagler.