

2026 George McKibben Memorial Scholarship Applications

Sponsor(s):

This award is sponsored by the Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts and its foundation.

Purpose:

This scholarship has been established by the Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts (AISWCD) to assist outstanding agriculture students in the completion of their education at any Illinois state college (University of Illinois, Eastern, Western, Southern and Illinois State). The student awarded the scholarship should demonstrate superior agriculture academic achievement, commitment to soil and water conservation and potential for innovation and/or leadership ability. The AISWCD Scholarship is awarded at the Annual Meeting & Summer Conference for the fall semester of the academic year.

History:

In the early 1960s no-till agriculture was not widely supported among farmers and agriculture specialists in the United States. George Elvert McKibben, however, made no-till the accepted farming technique that it is today. For thirty-seven years George McKibben was an agronomist for the University of Illinois. This work has been called the single most important contribution to corn production since the development and adaptation of hybrid seed corn.

In 1966 McKibben planted plots on which to conduct these experiments at Dixon Springs, Illinois. The plots are now named after George McKibben and are the oldest of their kind not only in Illinois, but also in the world. McKibben was recognized and given many awards during his lifetime. The best recognition he received was the fact that by 1985 more than 1M acres of farmland in Illinois were using no-till as a way of farming. McKibben died February 1, 1988, but the contributions that he made to no-till continue to be beneficial to this state as well as to the nation. He was a man dedicated to what seemed to many an impossible cause. However, McKibben believed in no-till and proved to the state, as well as the nation, that was a success. This scholarship is made possible by the funds his family has donated.

Eligibility:

Any student who is a senior in high school or any college student currently enrolled in any state college in Illinois (see eligible colleges in purpose above); in an agriculture degree program is eligible for nomination by their local soil and water conservation district or self-nomination.

To be eligible a student must:

- Be a senior in high school desiring to pursue an agriculture degree program and or be a full-time (minimum of 12 credit hours) college student enrolled in agriculture degree program at any state university in Illinois.
- Have a grade point average of 3.2 on a 4.0 scale or a 4.0 on 5.0 scale.
- Submit copy of latest official transcript.
- List all extracurricular or community activities, including offices held from high school forward.

Criteria:

- Demonstrated academic ability and achievement
- Commitment to soil and water conservation
- Potential for innovation and leadership ability

Nomination Process:

Applications must be complete and accompanied by the correct biographical information, transcript and a statement of educational and career goals.

Selection Process:

A committee shall review all nominations and select the student to be awarded the George McKibben Memorial Scholarship.

Award Package:

- Three (3) complimentary meal tickets to the AISWCD Recognition Luncheon in Springfield, Illinois where the award will be presented.
- Certificate of Achievement presented at the Recognition Luncheon.
- \$500.00 Scholarship which will be mailed when student sends in proof of enrollment.

Deadline:

All entries must be submitted to AISWCD by May 15, 2026.

Email to: tara.hopkins@aiswcd.org

Student Information:

Full Legal Name

Date of Birth (MM/DD/YYYY)

Permanent Address

City

State

ZIP

Email

Phone

Parent/Guardian Information:

Name of Parent, Guardian, or Spouse

Address

City

State

Zip

Email

Phone

Student Profile:

H.S. Attending/Graduated From (Name and City)

Year of Graduation

Date of Expected Graduation (H.S./College)

Current GPA/4.0 or 5.0 (Depending on Scale Used)

Question 1:

Have you applied for or received any form of financial aid? Please list below:

Question 2:

List all college extracurricular or community activities, including offices held.

Question 3:

Briefly state your educational plans and career objectives for the next 5 years. (500 words or less)

Character References:

List three (3) people who are well acquainted with your education and abilities, providing names, mailing address, email address, and telephone number for each.

Transcript:

Please provide a PDF copy of your transcript.

Disclaimer:

I hereby authorize the Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts to release any or all the preceding information, including copies of my transcript.

Name

Signature (Retype full legal name)

Date