



2024 BILLY MAX MOORE AWARD RECIPIENT: **Russ Connell**



Billy Max Moore recipient Russ Connell and NAIA Board Member Kenny Raiford.

James Russell Connell (Russ) started his career with the Georgia Department of Corrections at Montgomery State Prison in September of 1995. Russ started as a Correctional Officer and was immediately noticed by the prison administration as a man of integrity and great work ethic. Russ was quickly promoted through the ranks as a Correctional Officer during his tenure with DOC at Montgomery State Prison. In December of 2014 Russ had an opportunity to relocate to Joe Kennedy Farm in Lyons, Georgia and accept the position as a Farm & Livestock 2 Supervisor. The current farm manager knew Russ and his family and knew he was a very dependable and hardworking young man. It did not take long to realize that Russ was an employee that not only did his work on time and ahead of schedule but also motivated other employees to follow his lead. Within less than 2 years, Russ was promoted to the position as Farm Operations Manager for the entire Farm. Russ still holds this title at Joe Kennedy Farm since his promotion in June of 2016.

BILLY MAX MOORE AWARD



Billy Max Moore

The Billy Max Moore Award is designed to focus attention on the degree of excellence in our profession and to recognize outstanding performance. This award was named in honor of Billy Max Moore, who was an employee of the Texas Department of Correction from 1968 to 1981. Mr. Moore was the farm manager of the Ellis Unit, and an active member of the NAIA. Mr. Moore lost his life in the line of duty on April 4, 1981. It is in recognition of his supreme sacrifice, commemoration to the Texas Department of Corrections and institutional agribusiness, the NAIA Board of Directors dedicate this award.

Over my many years as Deputy Farm Director with GCI, I have learned more about this prestigious award and the kind of man that Mr. Billy Max was and the ultimate sacrifice he made for his profession. I have had the opportunity to see the class of individuals that have received this award over these past years and the joy they expressed by being recognized and associated with such a high caliber group of people. Russ' name immediately came to mind. We have 7 farm locations across the State of Georgia. Russ and his staff farm Joe Kennedy Farm which is a 2,600-acre farm consisting of 1,000 acres of row crops, 700 acres of hay and pastures, backgrounding of all the states calves (over 1,600 annually), oversees the progression of our beef marketing plan introduced by our Statewide Livestock Advisor, runs the on-farm feed mill, runs our gristmill, and keeps the entire farm immaculate every week.

Each year I set goals for all the farm managers and each year Russ continues to hit or exceed these goals for his farm. He is very independent, makes wise decisions consistently, is a natural leader, takes so much pride in his work and work results, treats his team like family, and is determined to get his job done each day like a professional. He always pays attention to detail and strives for excellence. If I had to pick one GCI employee to accomplish a task and know that it would be done on time and in a professional manner, I would choose Russ as my number one guy.

Russ has made a lasting impression on myself as well as the other staff. He has set the bar high for all managers to see. I forgot to mention he is also strong minded (nice way of saying he likes to argue) but this shows his passion, concern, and love of his work. Russ has earned my respect and admiration over these past 9 years of knowing him. I honestly feel that Mr. Billy Max Moore would be honored to have a man like Russ Connell receive this award in his memory.



Pictured left to right: Brent Galloway, Russ Connell and James Rogers