

## **Jesse Ray Ford Perpetual Trophy**

The Jesse Ray Ford Perpetual Trophy is awarded annually to the team or individual that earns the highest total number of points in any given year's Bedford County Hunter Pace Series. The winning team or individual must compete in all paces.

The trophy is a memorial to Jesse Ray Ford, who served as first whip to both the Bedford County Hunt and the Fox Valley Beagles. Jesse Ray, a local Rustburg boy, was larger than life. He was the Amherst County Extension Agent for years and a 4-H leader who profoundly impacted the lives of those he touched. As Dot Morcom accurately said, "He made the lives of dozens of Amherst County teens have a brilliance that could not be expressed in words by dedicating each weekend to spending time with those kids in his 4-H group."

He left the area to earn his PH.D. at the University of Tennessee, and from there was hired as the Professional Huntsman for the Midland Foxhounds in Columbus, Georgia, a truly legendary pack. Jesse Ray served in this position until diagnosed with a brain tumor in the 1990s. He returned home to Rustburg with his wife Julie and three sons and passed away in 1999. The Reverend Jerry Falwell personally gave his eulogy. To quote Med Long, "We all loved and adored him. He brought out the best in everyone he met, and I've never ever met anyone who could make me laugh as hard as he could. He was, in a word, magical."



**Jesse Ray Ford**  
**November 2, 1944 – March 10, 1999**