went beyond the planning and funding of a building and a facility for the next 40 or 50 years. They searched for a symbol of emerging leadership in agriculture. A "princess" was suggested as was a "snowman". A 150' long by 25' high Red River Valley panorama painted on the front of the new Winter Shows building wasn’t practical. A farm animal mascot was impossible because of its care and upkeep. This brainstorming among the Winter Shows board was finally placed in the hands of a committee who were to search for a symbol that would reach out into every county annually and could develop into something that would be maintained by people out in each county, yet focused on the Red River Valley Winter Shows. The King Agassiz project was born.

The first committee meeting was held December 12, 1960, at 3:30 p.m. at the Northwest School of Agriculture. The board of managers appointed George Nornes as chairman, and he gathered the following committee around him for this meeting. Mrs. Sonja Knapp, Marlin Johnson (Asst. County Agent, West Polk County), John Drake and Fred Schulzke (Adv. from the fund-raising campaign office). Mr. Ray Eggert (Beltrami) was added to the committee. The committee minutes record suggestions for added committee membership.

The idea of finding a county representative in each county to be honored continued to grow. The involvement of county agents and Vo-Ag instructors to select the initial county candidates was discussed because a name for the county representative didn’t come easy. Titles from "atomic age farmer" to "Agassiz Farm King" were developed. Finally from a list of 18, King Agassiz for the Winter Shows region and County King Agassiz for the county representative were picked.

The County Kings are chosen locally in each county, and the King Agassiz is selected by expert judges at the Winter Shows. Deadlines were set. Machinery was established out in the county for the selection of candidates. The following rules applied: The first selection committees in the county were made up of the county extension agent and Vo-Ag instructors. Local newspapers cooperated by writing a story on the project requesting nominations be sent to the county agent, the final selection in time to be honored, announced and publicized prior to the Winter Shows.

Choosing these candidates is not a beauty or popularity contest. The person chosen must have qualities of leadership needed to reach the rich potential of farming and related living in the Red River Basin. The candidate must be 25 to 39 years of age. The person is judged chiefly on what he does with what he has. His basic farming progress is demonstration of his talent as a developing, farm businessperson. The way he overcomes obstacles is important as are his general community reputation, and his personality to represent the Winter Shows before the public in an adequate manner. The committee met several times and by early January cleared the hurdles for the King Agassiz idea. Information went out to the counties. The counties produced nine County Kings for the 1961 Winter Shows. It was a very creditable beginning. The committee was enlarged to make the final plans, with George Nornes as chairman, Mrs. Sonja Knapp (FHA, Climax), Marlin Johnson (Asst. County Agent, West Polk County), Ray Eggert (Beltrami), Mrs. Gilman Hanson (Crookston), T.W. Dr. James Lofgren, President of the Winter Shows, officially signals a new era by shifting the hat from King Agassiz XXII (bare headed) to Marvin Hanson, Hallock, MN, at the 1983 Winter Shows. L to R: President Lofgren; Charles Swanson, King Agassiz XXII, Michael Swanson, Steven Swanson, Patti Swanson, Gail Hanson, Marvin Hanson, King Agassiz XXIII; George and Kate Hanson.

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