

INFLUENCE

2016

Alumni Newsletter

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE & LIFE SCIENCES
MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY



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2016

Alumni Newsletter

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
Mississippi State University

Mark E. Keenum MSU President

Gregory A. Bohach Vice President, DAFVM

George M. Hopper Dean

Scott Willard Associate Dean

DEPARTMENT HEADS

Jonathan Pote Agricultural & Biological Engineering

Keith Coble Agricultural Economics

John Blanton Animal & Dairy Sciences

Jeff Dean Biochemistry, Molecular Biology, Entomology
& Plant Pathology

Will Evans Food Science, Nutrition & Health Promotion

Michael Newman School of Human Sciences

Sadik Artunc Landscape Architecture

Mike Phillips Plant & Soil Sciences

Mary Beck Poultry Science

EDITOR

Karen Brasher

DESIGN

David Ammon

Dominique Belcher

WRITERS

Vanessa Beeson

Karen Brasher

Sarah Buckleitner

Kenner Patton

PHOTOGRAPHY

David Ammon

Megan Bean

Dominique Belcher

Karen Brasher

Taze Fulford

Nathan Gregory

Russ Houston

Kevin Hudson

Kat Lawrence

Kenner Patton

Beth Wynn

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On the cover: Delta-based Simmons catfish is produced and distributed by CALS alumnus Harry Simmons. (Photo by David Ammon)

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Letter from the Dean

THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE and Life Sciences (CAL S) alumni are making an impact. At over 15,000 strong, our alumni are influencing every aspect of agriculture, life sciences, and all of the industries in which they contribute.

And the next generation of agricultural leaders, our student body, is exceptional. They have set themselves apart as leaders, locally and nationally. They give me confidence in our bright future.

It seems most appropriate that the name of our magazine is *Influence*. From our student body to our alumni, to the faculty and staff who work hard to train this next generation, the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences is making a difference every day.

Thank you for your participation in these endeavors. We are not happy to sit back and enjoy our successes but continue to push forward, expanding new horizons, discovering new knowledge, and working with our alumni to help feed and clothe the world.

Our student body continues to grow with 2,440 enrolled in the fall of 2016, a 71 percent increase in the last decade. And our students are going outside of their comfort zones to travel abroad and conduct cutting-edge research.

In 2016, CAL S students studied in Brazil, Europe, Guatemala, New Zealand, and China. The CAL S Undergraduate Research Scholars program included over 30 students in 2016. This program is producing some great young scientists, many of whom have won major awards and scholarships and continue on to graduate school.

We celebrated milestones this year as the Department of Landscape Architecture celebrated 50 years in 2016. We also are filling faculty positions with the best and brightest. We completed the leadership team with the addition of Dr. Keith Coble as head of the Department of Agricultural Economics. A longtime faculty member, Dr. Coble has brought experience and passion in his new position. We also hired 18 new faculty



members in the College and the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station (MAFES) during 2016.

Of course, none of our accomplishments would happen without the support of our alumni and friends. Thank you for funding student scholarships, study abroad, facilities, and more. This year we received over \$3.6 million in gifts. I am so thankful for your support. As we continue to grow, we are expanding our facilities to better serve our faculty, students, and industry. The Meat Science and Muscle Biology Laboratory, located on the corner of Stone Boulevard and Blackjack Road, is nearing completion. This is the first of three buildings to be completed in a new animal complex. This issue of *Influence* contains information about the buildings and naming opportunities.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue of *Influence* and discovering the incredible impact our alumni and students make each and every day and into the future. Thank you for your continued support. *Hail State!*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George Hopper". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

George M. Hopper
Dean and Director



2016 ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR

George D. Thomas Jr.

GEORGE D. “DAVE” THOMAS JR. IS A 1987 MASTER’S in agricultural economics graduate. Thomas is vice president of marketing for Helena Chemical Company.

Thomas has enjoyed a productive career with Helena Chemical Company that is approaching 30 years. Helena is one of the world’s foremost agricultural chemical formulators and distributors.

Thomas joined Helena in 1987. Over the years, he has served as location manager for Louisiana and Mississippi and also as manager for the South Delta Division and for the South Texas Division.

In 2009, Thomas became vice president of marketing for the company with responsibility for all acquisitions, fertilizers, precision agriculture, and application technologies.

Beyond Helena Chemical Company, Thomas is a national leader in the agricultural industry with board memberships for CropLife America, Crop Protection Association, Agricultural Retailers Association, and the Fluid Fertilizer Foundation.



2016 CALS ALUMNI FELLOW

Loston Rowe

DR. LOSTON ROWE IS A 1984 AND 1986 AGRONOMY graduate. Rowe serves as the retail accounts manager for DuPont Crop Protection, a company that he has worked with in different roles since 1989.

After earning his bachelor and master's degrees at MSU, he continued his education at Michigan State University, where he graduated with his doctorate from the Department of Crop and Soil Sciences with an emphasis on weed science in 1989.

Rowe remembers experiences from his time at Mississippi State University that strongly impacted his life. During his time as a student, Rowe “enjoyed being able to tutor some of the younger students, as well as many of the international students” within his department.

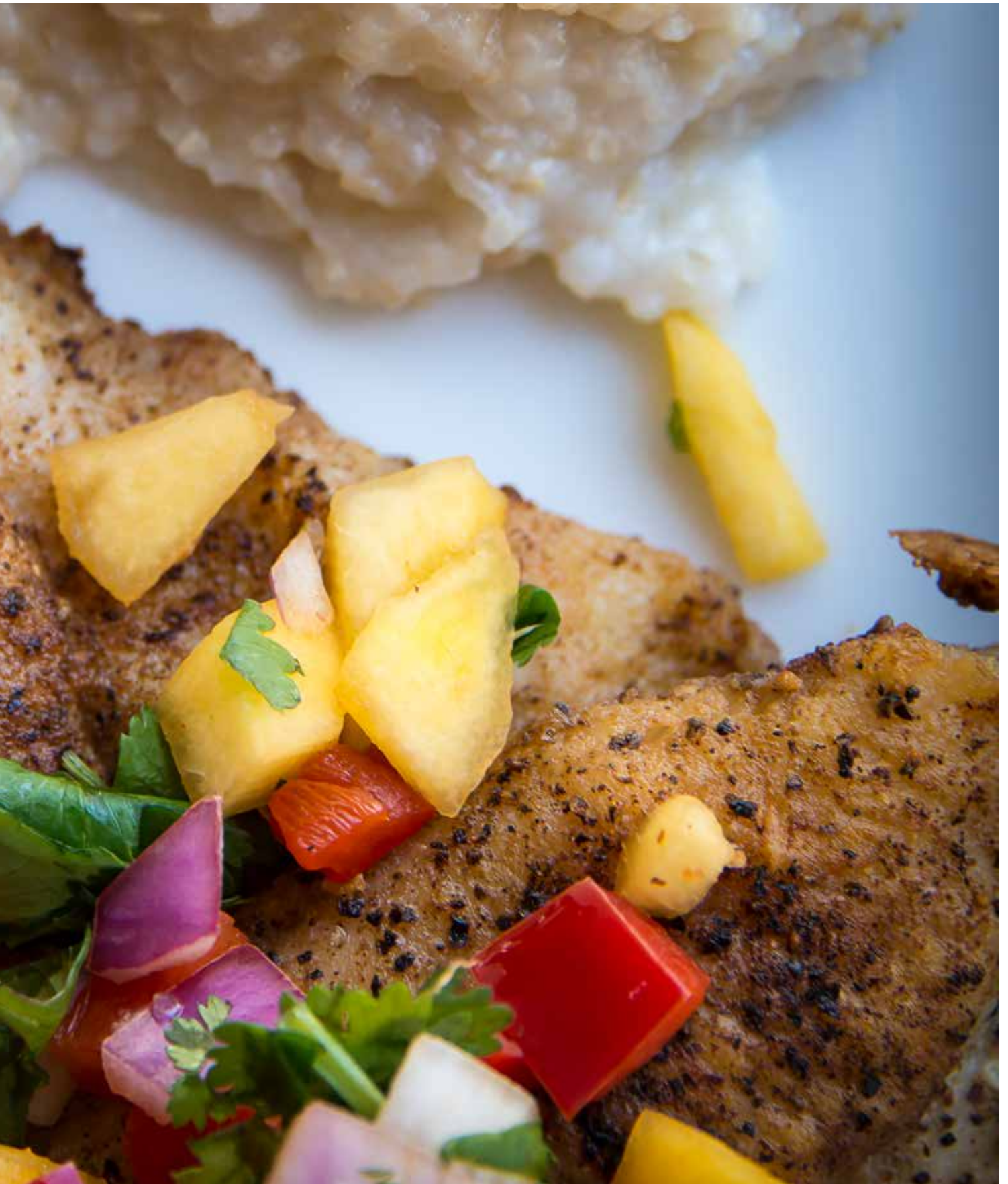
Throughout his career with DuPont, Rowe has worked on various publications and patents and is a member of numerous organizations, including the Dean’s Advisory Council for the MSU College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

Made in

Mississippi

OVER THE YEARS, alumni in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences have added essential ingredients to enrich the Magnolia State's cuisine. For forty years, Delta-based Simmons Catfish has provided high-quality catfish fillets to customers throughout the Southeast. In 2013, fourth-generation Delta row-crop farmers founded Delta Blues Rice. Their products, which offer new twists on old favorites, are becoming staples in restaurants and kitchens across the region. To top it off, Reed Food Technology blends art and science to provide made-in-Mississippi seasonings and sauces. Grab a plate and help yourself to some of our state's finest foods, courtesy of Mississippi State University alumni.





Fresh from the pond

Delta catfish farmer feeds a region

By Kenner Patton

THE HALF A CENTURY tradition of catfish farming in the Mississippi Delta is a storied legacy that translates to delicious aquatic fare on tables across the South and beyond. One pillar of that tradition can be found in **Harry Simmons**, a catfish farmer who harvested his first crop of catfish in Humphreys and Yazoo Counties in 1978. Cut to today and his plant processes 350,000 pounds of catfish per week with the Simmons brand growing jobs and catfish in the heart of the Mississippi Delta. However, in the beginning, this entrepreneur lived the typical life of a young man growing up in the region.

Simmons grew up in a traditional cotton and soybean farming family in the area near Yazoo and Humphreys counties. He attended school in the small towns of Louise and Yazoo City. After high school, his parents expected him to go to college somewhere.

“A lot of my friends were going to Mississippi State, so I thought I might as well, too,” Simmons said. “I always wanted to be a farmer, so it seemed like a good fit.”

Simmons graduated in 1972 with a degree in agricultural economics, the same department that was instrumental in providing economic data to those interested

in catfish production, processing, and distribution. It also provided analysis of various feed ingredients, which is one of the primary costs for catfish production.

After a brief stint in the United States Army, he knew he wanted to come home to the Delta and farm. His family didn’t have a large operation, but with forty acres of family land he purchased 600 acres joining the forty and rented an additional 350 acres in 1974 and began a cotton and soybean operation. After that, he was able to increase his venture by renting and purchasing additional land.

His first year was very profitable, but then the second year was a disaster. That’s when Simmons made some career-changing decisions.

Simmons knew that to stabilize his operation and remain productive year around, he needed to diversify. And not just from an income and cash flow standpoint, but also from a workforce point of view, too. Simmons had recently become interested in the catfish industry cropping up on nearby farms.

“It just seemed like a good fit. When the row crop operation had a slow year, the catfish could potentially make up the difference, and vice versa,” Simmons said.

He began talking to local catfish farmers about growing catfish. Along with their advice, and lots of assistance from the local MSU Extension Service agent, Tommy Taylor, Simmons decided to build his first ponds in 1977 and grow his first crop of catfish in 1978.

And as with any commodity, you have to be able to sell the harvest, thus yet another innovative thought from Simmons. After selling to local processing plants for four years, he decided to build a plant of his own in 1982.

When the facility opened, his goal was to process 2,500 pounds per week. Within a year, the plant was processing 120,000 pounds per week.

“We could start to tell that we were approaching a closed-loop process that offered 100 percent quality control. It starts with fresh water, growing our fingerlings (baby catfish), making our own fish





Harry Simmons, along with his daughter, Katy, discuss the upcoming activities at Simmons Catfish. (Photo by Kenner Patton)

feed, raising our fish, processing, and marketing the final products,” Simmons said.

Now the operation employs nearly 225 people and is one of the largest non-governmental employers in Yazoo County. His operation has grown to 1,000 acres of catfish ponds and he farms another 500 water acres with other partners. He also still grows corn and soybeans.

Simmons is quick to point out that he has been blessed to be able to work with some of his family members and

such a fine staff.

“We have been processing catfish for 35 years. We have around 20 employees approaching 30-plus years of employment,” Simmons said. “And I am particularly proud of my daughter, Katy, my son-in-law, Andy; and my nephew, Dan Bradshaw. Katy is the marketing and brand development director, and has brought a lot to the business by contributing her experience from a culinary degree and three years at Bon Appétit magazine. Andy,

thing you are passionate about, be ‘all-in,’ and apply yourself in school. In my case, when your name is on the box, I figured out really quick that it better be good.”

When it’s time to enjoy the fruits of his labor, Simmons says he prefers his wife’s catfish spread on French bread. Simmons Farm-Raised Catfish is available at restaurants and grocers throughout the nation. Find out where you can purchase fresh-from-the-pond flavor on their website at www.simmonscatfish.com.

former Deputy Commissioner of Agriculture, oversees the processing plant and Dan manages the farm.

Simmons was named President of Delta Council in 2016, an area economic development organization representing the eighteen Delta and part-Delta counties of Northwest Mississippi.

As for advice to students, Simmons laughs and said, “My daughter will tell you that I have plenty of advice. But if I were speaking to students, I would say that making a good living is hard. Just find some-

Soul Food

MSU Alums Shine the Spotlight on Rice

By Sarah Buckleitner

F EED THE BODY, feel the soul: that's the motto of Delta Blues Rice, an up-and-coming business run by Mississippi State alumni, **David Arant Jr., David Arant Sr., and Hugh Arant Jr.** With the same soil that nourished the blues and grew some of America's first comfort foods, Delta Blues Rice is putting a gourmet twist on a southern classic, and transforming a side into the star of the show.

The rice is grown on the Arant family farm, which began in the 1920s—around the same time Freddie Spruell, one of the first Delta blues musicians, recorded his album, *Milk Cow Blues*.

As the Delta blues gained notoriety, Hugh and David Sr.'s grandfather, Newton Carver, moved into uncultivated swamp land to begin farming.

"Farming the Delta was difficult back then—you had to drain and clear swamp land. There were snakes, cougars, and black bears," said Hugh Arant, Jr.

However, the rich soil made it well worth their time—it was perfect for row crops.

When Carver was ready to retire, he passed the land onto the next generation. In 1950, Hugh Arant, Sr., who had married Carver's daughter, Kathryn, started his first crop. Initially the Arants stuck to cotton, but as the farm grew, they branched out into wheat, rice, soybeans, and catfish.

When the second generation retired,

Hugh Jr. and David Sr. took the helm. Both men attended Mississippi State University. Hugh graduated in 1973 in agricultural engineering and David received his degree in 1978, after studying agricultural economics.

While at Mississippi State, Hugh played on the Southeastern Conference winning baseball team and attended Mississippi State baseball's first College World Series.

One of his favorite memories of his school days occurred during the World Series.

"After the first game on Friday night, we went to eat supper, and Jack Cristil, the legendary Mississippi State radio announcer, came with us. I'll never forget that," Hugh said.

Athletics also initially drew David Arant, Sr. to Mississippi State. He had received a football scholarship but a knee injury sidelined his collegiate career. However, the lasting connections and solid education he received made up for his inability to play.

"I still run into people I met during my time at State, even though it's been years. It's an incredibly strong, lasting community," David Sr. said "It's also fun to see how things have changed over time. Tailgating by the 'Malfunction Junction' wasn't popular when I attended, and now it's considered a tradition."



His son, David Jr., took a slightly different route before returning to his roots. While he also attended Mississippi State, he wasn't sure if he wanted to return to the farm after graduation.

"I started out in agricultural engineering technology and business, and then switched to civil engineering," David Jr. said.

He pursued a career in civil engineering for several years, before deciding to carry on the family legacy of working the land as a fourth-generation farmer. And, as his uncle affectionately puts it, "David Jr. gets either the blame or the credit for Delta Blues Rice."



David Arant, Sr., David Arant, Jr., and Hugh Arant, Jr., in a test kitchen at Delta Blues Rice headquarters in Ruleville, Mississippi. (Photo by Kenner Patton)

Started in 2013, the small company developed its signature product, rice grits, after running their rice through an old mill, located on premises. The mill broke the grains, and the resulting rice had a creamy, luxurious texture.

The Arants also stick to a single variety of rice, which was developed by scientists at the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Experiment Station's Delta Research and Extension Center in Washington County—only a stone's throw from the farm.

“We’re taking a locally-developed rice variety, growing it a county over, and processing it onsite. By sticking to a single

variety, there is a distinctive flavor and consistency to our product,” Hugh said.

When the rice found its way onto the plates of family and friends, Delta Blues Rice emerged. After only four years of production, the company has already been featured in two national magazines and ships their products around the United States. They also won the food category of Garden and Gun magazine’s 2016 “Made in the South” awards, which was judged by best-selling author and celebrity chef, Alton Brown.

David Jr. contributes some of his success to the work he did on the farm growing up. “I remember working in the rice field

when I was a kid. I thought earning minimum wage was a big deal. At the time, the work I did on the farm was miserable. But now I have fond memories and I believe learning how to work hard contributed to my success,” he said.

Life on the farm is ever-changing, depending on the weather, crops in rotation, and time of the year. It has also changed through the generations, as new technology came along to make the work easier.

“It doesn’t require backbreaking labor anymore, which is better for everyone,” Hugh remarked.

The Arants employ seven to eight employees, depending on the work that needs to be done, and all the Arant children have worked in the fields—though David Jr. is currently the only one of his generation to get involved with the farm.

Each Arant man has a favorite way to eat Delta Blues Rice. Hugh prefers to keep it simple with rice and butter or gravy, David Sr. likes to mix vegetables into his, and David Jr. loves the shrimp and rice grits recipe his wife makes. But they can all agree: “This rice is not just rice. It’s soul food.”

Want a bite? Look for Delta Blues Rice in Whole Foods, Kroger, Rouses, and many other retailers, or purchase it on their website at www.deltabluesrice.com.

The Science of Sauce

Mississippi State alum concocts local sauces and spices

By Sarah Buckleitner

IN THE HALLS of Reed Food Technology, one moment the scent of barbecue sauce wafts through the air—reminiscent of summer evenings at an open grill—and the next, the tang of hot sauce conjures images of chicken wings and football.

R.J. Reed, a Mississippi State alum and owner of Reed Food Technology, crafted the company based on the concept that superior products could be created by combining science, art, and high quality ingredients.

“I was always interested in the science of food,” Reed said, “And I wanted to combine that with my passion for working with people.”

Reed Food Technology was created in 1995, when Reed left behind his job at McCarty Foods to become a supplier. He started with spice blends, relying on other companies to manufacture the seasonings. His business grew in 1999, when he purchased a facility in Jackson to do his own manufacturing.

Since then, he has worked hard to reduce his debt line and increase business.

“We have business all around the country, and we work hard to keep a diversified customer base. Mostly, we supply major food manufacturers and food service operations,” Reed said.

For instance, if you’ve eaten at Jack’s Restaurants, there’s a chance you’ve slathered your chicken tenders in sauce

developed and manufactured at Reed Food Technology.

“We work with manufacturers to develop custom products with high quality ingredients,” Reed explained.

The facility includes a lab for product development, where technicians in white lab coats create products for clients.

Reed’s ties to Mississippi State University pop up everywhere—a maroon and white doormat welcomes visitors to his office, and Bulldog paraphernalia can be glimpsed through the open doors of his employees’ offices.

Reed graduated from Mississippi State in 1980 with both his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in food science. He attributes a portion of his success to the connections he made and education he received while at State.

“I feel very strongly that Mississippi State gave me an excellent educational base, which allowed me to be successful,” Reed stated.

The professors he interacted with particularly impacted Reed. He cites his major advisor **Dr. Gale Ammerman** and **Dr. Bob Rogers** in the then-Food Science and Technology Institute and **Dr. Walter Newson** in the College of Business, as inspirations to his career in food sciences.

“The professors were great. They gave me wonderful exposure to the industry,” Reed said.

After graduation, Reed began a doctoral degree at Purdue in food science with a focus on packaging research, but he was soon whisked away by a job offer from the American Can Company.





Jeff Reed and R.J. Reed at Reed Food Technology in Pearl, Mississippi. (Photo by David Ammon)

“The first product I worked on was the plastic ketchup bottle,” Reed explained. “My job was to test food in packages, and I had the chance to travel all over the country. It laid a great foundation for the rest of my career.”

He ended up back in Mississippi when the poultry company, McCarty Foods, recruited him to develop products for national food service operations. When that company was purchased by Tyson, Reed felt it was time to branch out on his own as a supplier.

Since then, Reed Food Technology has continued to grow. Reed purchased Taste Maker Foods in Memphis in 2007, and has since worked to expand his facilities, capabilities, and product line.

While his two sons, Justin and Jeff Reed, work for the family business, that

wasn't originally the plan.

“I always told them growing up that they weren't working in my business—that they needed to branch out and develop their own careers. But then I read about transitioning family businesses, and I approached them about joining the team,” Reed said.

Justin Reed also went to Mississippi State University for his undergraduate degree and MBA in business information systems before becoming a pilot for Mississippi State University. He now runs the Memphis branch of Reed Food Technology, Taste Maker Foods.

“My time at Mississippi State University helped prepare me to problem solve, run a business, and deal with people—all crucial skills for the work I do with Reed Food Technology,” Justin said.

Jeff Reed went to the Culinary Institute of America—where he honed his artistic flair for food before becoming a manager at Whole Foods. In 2009, he switched to running the Reed Food Technology operation in Jackson, while his father transitioned into an advisory role.

“I started out in the lab doing research and development, and then worked my way up to a managerial position. But I've been working here since I was 12 or 13 years old, doing dirty jobs. Whenever they needed the building caulked or rocks moved, I was the guy,” Jeff said.

Overall, he loves the work.

“It's something different every day, and there are always new challenges. Because we work with so many different products, there's always something exciting happening,” Jeff said.

Justin's favorite part of working for the family business is the extra time he gets to spend with his family.

“I love getting to work with my dad and brother,” he said.

As for their favorite things to eat?

“I love to cook, but especially Italian cuisine. I'd say my favorite recipe is homemade macaroni and cheese, with everything made from scratch,” Jeff said.

His father prefers smoking ribs and chicken—which is lucky, because they happen to manufacture over 160 barbecue sauces.

And Justin loves all food: “There are very few things that I dislike.”

One thing is for sure: whether it's barbecue, Italian, or macaroni and cheese, the Reeds know how to transform the science of cooking into a work of art.

TEACHING THE TECHNOLOGY TO FEED THE WORLD

Alumnus T.J. Bradford immerses students in precision agriculture

By Sarah Buckleitner

IN DR. T.J. BRADFORD'S OPINION, TO teach precision agriculture you have to let students get their hands dirty.

Bradford, an instructor in the Department of Plant and Soil Sciences, earned his master's degree in agronomy at Mississippi State University, and went on to earn his doctoral degree in agricultural education. He now teaches the precision agriculture course and lab, where he emphasizes the importance of hands-on learning for precision agriculture students.

Dr. Scott Willard, associate dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Science, spoke to Bradford's skillfulness as an instructor.

"Dr. Bradford has students coming to precision agriculture from many different backgrounds, but with his unique blend of agronomy and agricultural education he not only has technical expertise, but can approach teaching from the perspective of a trained educator," Willard stated.

Bradford has taken a new approach to teaching theory-heavy subjects.

"The goal of my teaching is to pair experiential learning with practical experiences. A lot of students are looking for technology to bring back to the farm, and without practical experience they may know a lot of theory but be unable to apply that theory in a professional setting," Bradford stated.

Bradford grew up on a farm in Isola, Mississippi, a small town in Humphreys county. There his family grows peas, butter beans, squash, and watermelons, among other produce. His early experience with agriculture led him to pursue the topic in

his major at Mississippi State University in 2008.

"As soon as I stepped on campus, I fell in love. The faculty members are great and there's an atmosphere of teamwork throughout the department," Bradford said.

His major advisor, Dr. Barry Stewart, made a particular impact on him.

"Dr. Stewart made connections for me, helped me build my course schedule, and ensured that my courses always reflected my future goals. He was pivotal in my career," Bradford explained.

Dr. William Kingery, another professor in the plant and soil sciences department, also helped influence Bradford's career.

"Dr. Kingery made me think. When I first came to school, I just wanted to know the answers. But he forced me to step back and learn how to solve problems," Bradford said.

Bradford had initially planned to be a soil scientist, but his experience working with the United State Department of Agriculture made him realize that while he was passionate about plants, he preferred to work with people.

"I got lonely spending my days in the field or on the computer. While I loved the work, I knew that it wasn't the career for me. So for my doctoral degree, I combined my passions by studying agricultural education."

His doctoral work, which centered on gathering information about how students best learn agronomy only reinforced his inclination to teach.

"I worked with three different high

schools, and divided the students in half. Half of the students just received theoretical education on agriculture. The other half received theory in conjunction with a high tunnel, where they could play out the theories they learned in the classroom," Bradford explained.

The results inspired him.

"The students who had the high tunnel got really into it. They started a garden club when the class was over, and some even came to Mississippi State for an agronomy summer camp. Even though they didn't necessarily want to go into agriculture, what they learned by combining theory with hands-on application resonated with them."

Bradford applies that experience to the teaching he does now.

"When teaching, I try to emphasize how the theory we learn fits into the real world through practical assignments. In the new precision agriculture lab, students are exposed to all the programs they will need to be able to use in a professional setting," Bradford explained.

With growing populations and shrinking arable land mass, Bradford believes that educating students about the power of precision agriculture has never been more important.

"The application of precision agriculture is astounding. Right now we're striving to feed the world—to feed nine billion people by 2050—and I believe that precision agriculture is the key to reaching that goal. It enables us to do more with less; the sheer possibilities make me giddy," Bradford concluded.



MSU instructor T.J. Bradford (left) works with senior agronomy major John Clay Lyles of Lawrence in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences' new Precision Agriculture Laboratory in Dorman Hall. (Photo by David Ammon)

Claude Thompson, William E. Lutrick, Thomas Eaves, Jordan Hillman, Alan Hoops, and Aaron Ruffin pose for a photo at the Landscape Architecture 50th anniversary. (Photo by Karen Brasher)





A BROAD LANDSCAPE

Landscape architecture alumni discuss varied careers

By Vanessa Beeson

IN 2016, the Department of Landscape Architecture celebrated 50 years. In April, faculty, friends, students, and alumni from around the country returned to Starkville to celebrate the milestone. The department's mission to "foster the will and ability to plan, design, build, and manage regenerative communities" was built on the foundation laid by such innovators as Ed Martin, who spent 45 years at MSU building the program. Others include Cameron Man who helped elevate that program by working to add a Master of Landscape Architecture to the curriculum and Robert Callaway, whose vision helped establish a landscape contracting and management program within the department. Still, the leadership of current faculty like Sadik Artunc, professor and department head, continue to propel that vision forward in a new era. While current faculty and students are focused on design, planning, building, and managing landscapes, there is a growing emphasis on community, with much of the current student work centered on helping local communities. Influence had the opportunity to interview a cross section of landscape architecture professionals who graduated at various times throughout the program's history. Visit www.cals.msstate.edu/alumni/influence for a full length Q&A with each of these alumni to discover how their time at MSU helped shape their careers and their place in the communities they serve.

Claude Thompson

Claude Thompson earned a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture with a horticulture concentration in 1967. He was the first student to begin the landscape program, which became accredited a semester after he graduated. (While fellow classmate, Bill Lutrick, is considered the first official graduate of the accredited program, both Thompson and Lutrick had an identical course load despite their different degrees). Learn about how Thompson's journey to the new degree program back in 1967 shaped a long, illustrious career in the public, private, and academic sectors. Also find out how a stint as an editorial cartoonist for the Reflector got Thompson more than he bargained for.

Thomas Eaves

Thomas Eaves graduated with a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture in 1973 after a four year stint in the United States Air Force. He grew up on a farm in Louisville, Mississippi where he loved scouting and became an Eagle Scout. He was married with a child when he began his academic career at MSU. Discover how Eaves traveled the country designing the most unlikely of spaces—cemeteries—and how that work helped inform a long career as a principal in a landscape architecture firm that serves the Hattiesburg area.

A young Bill Lutrick (left) meets with representatives from the Girl Scout Council to discuss his senior project, a master plan for a 360-acre program center for the area council. (Photo submitted)

William E. Lutrick

William E. (Bill) Lutrick, graduated with a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture in Fall 1968, becoming the first student to be awarded the BLA degree. Originally, Lutrick wanted to be an architect, however, during the 1960s, no colleges in Mississippi offered an architectural degree. He started at MSU as a liberal arts major, but once he heard about the new landscape architecture department, he switched majors and has spent nearly 50 years in a career he loves. Discover how Lutrick's career as a landscape architect spanned various industries beginning with the Girl Scouts of America and ending with aviation design. Also learn about Lutrick's second act helping to preserve historical landscapes across the country.





Alan Hoops

Alan Hoops graduated with a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture in 1985. He started out as an architecture major at the University of Cincinnati and transferred to MSU to pursue engineering. While neither of those majors proved a fit, he learned about landscape architecture, with elements that combined the two and felt right at home. Learn how a chance meeting in college with a world-renowned landscape architect changed Hoops' outlook on the field. Also discover how a leap of faith turned into one of the best decisions of his career.

A cell tower in Madison, MS designed by Alan Hoops. (Photo by MSU alumnae Kim Crothers)

Aaron Ruffin

Aaron Ruffin graduated with a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture in 2005. He continued on at MSU earning a Master of Public Policy and Administration in 2007. Ruffin works as a network real estate manager for Mobilitie, a telecommunications infrastructure company. He is a member of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) Diversity Summit, which brings a dozen landscape architects from around the U.S. together to discuss ways the ASLA can expand the profession as more ethnically and culturally diverse. Learn more about Ruffin's mission as a champion of diversity and how he seeks to leverage the broad nature of the profession to diversify his own skills. Aaron Ruffin

Jordan Hillman

Jordan Hillman graduated with a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture in 2009. She began working at a garden center in high school where two coworkers—landscape architects and MSU alums—mentored Hillman toward the profession. She is the community development director of Brandon, Mississippi. Find out how encouragement from professors coupled with her involvement in ASLA student chapter as an undergrad helped shaped Hillman's career in the public sector.

BEHIND THE SCENES WITH NY FASHION WEEK PRODUCER AND CREATIVE ENTREPRENEUR MARITTA VIOLA

MSU Alumnae makes mark on Big Apple fashion

By Naakai Addy

WHEN WE THINK OF NEW YORK Fashion Week (NYFW), most of us think of the designers and how we're going to incorporate next season's trends without having to replace our entire wardrobes.

What we rarely see is the well-oiled, incredibly complex machine that makes major fashion shows possible. We rarely see the job behind the scenes that manages the details, encourages the designers, coordinates the guest list, and puts all of the pieces together just in time for the lights to go up on the runway.

That job? Show producer.

If you didn't think about the work of a fashion show producer in the past, a conversation with producer, creative mind, and organizational powerhouse Maritta Viola should do the trick.

Maritta has always been an out-of-the-box thinker, but that's not all it takes to make it in fashion. For her, singular determination, astute vision, and unwavering focus have been critical ingredients in her journey from a small town in Germany to producing shows for NYFW.

Maritta was born and raised in Germany, where she earned top marks in school, competed in track and field at the highest levels, and won prominent art contests. Those achievements would have been enough for most adolescents, but Maritta knew that there had to be a greater outlet for her talent and passion. An illness made her question the longevity of an athletic career, and she never felt quite at home in her hometown.

At 16, she accepted an opportunity to study abroad as an exchange student in Mississippi, and that's where the next

chapter of her life began. Maritta spent a year there, and was transformed by the warmth, openness, and hospitality she experienced. Though her German upbringing had reinforced her natural work ethic, it wasn't until she moved to the States that she felt the freedom to be fuse business acumen and creativity in momentous new ways.

"When I first arrived in Mississippi I was in awe," Maritta shares, "having never seen such broad and open spaces of countryside in my life, I was astonished by the beauty of nature and also by the warm-hearted hospitality of Mississippi residents as well as my wonderful host family. While maintaining some German structure and habits, I also learned how to enjoy the little things in life and relax when work was done which created a valuable balance of managerial skills and a love for life."

The rest is history: Maritta finished school in Germany, and then applied to Mississippi State University so that she could resume her promising path to being the creative professional she'd dreamed of.

After graduating with a degree in Human Sciences Fashion Design and Merchandising in 2013, she became a retail fashion director and rose through the ranks, eventually transitioning into her current role as a show producer and brand developer.

That professional rise involved a lot of hard work, but it's not surprising that those around her took note of her commitment to collaboration, generosity, and honesty, and quickly recognized her potential.

Maritta's interest in fashion didn't

come out of nowhere. Though she doesn't remember it herself, her mother reminds her that while waiting for her older siblings to finish their sports practices, Maritta would style her mother at the local shopping center.

That innate understanding of how to pull disparate elements together to form a cohesive, compelling finished product exemplifies Maritta's unique blend of creative vision and shrewd analytical savvy. It is these qualities that make her the ideal show producer. She understands the creativity and inspiration that many designers rely on, but she can also seamlessly navigate the many organizational nuances of producing a show (without distracting the designers from their creative process).

Maritta has found the primary task of show production to be syncing her level of idea visualization with the designer's.

"You must learn," she explains, "to understand the designer's thoughts, wishes, and ideas before you can interpret [them] into business actions. Another challenge is to be adaptive to changes in a fast-paced environment and to be solution-driven at all times."

That alignment of vision and constant adaptability begins quite literally the day after the previous Fashion Week ends. As soon as it's time to look ahead towards the next season, it's time to get right back to work planning another spectacular show.

Though it's a long and involved process, Maritta relishes in every aspect of it: working with her talented team, reaching out to celebrities and press, helping designers make their vision a reality,

MSU alumnae Maritta Viola.
(Photo by Paul Walker)



and connecting with some of the most incredible creative minds in the industry.

On the day of the show, getting into the right mindset is essential.

“The morning of the show; all preparation must be complete, but your brain is still working very hard making sure you have everything covered on your checklist and are ready to go. I usually wake up and go over my last-minute checklist of notes, pack model information, show time notes, and other routine notes I prepared prior to this day and quickly go over it again in my mind. Generally I know everything by heart at that time, but I like to triple-check myself—because once I arrive at the venue, time passes quickly and I only have a few hours to get everything rolling until show time.”

It isn't just her internal mindset that Maritta has to manage on the day of the show—it's the energy and confidence she projects to her team.

Maritta prioritizes backstage management, using the drive and inspiration of adrenaline to help temper the chaos and time constraints, which could otherwise be overwhelming.

The models arrive about three hours before show time, and Maritta arrives even earlier than them (as well as the backstage crew). Upon arrival, she touches base with her production team and ensures that the designers are settled in.

It is then time to allocate tasks among the backstage crew, all the while staying attentive to the designers' needs. It is critical that everyone is prepared, knows what they have to do, and feels capable of completing their tasks.

The purpose behind her rigorous

preparation is to ensure that the models and backstage crew can put their full trust in her, and follow her lead. Confidence and calm, in her experience, has a trickle-down effect backstage.

When the show comes to an end and celebrations are underway, Maritta's joy and relief sink in. “The ultimate enjoyment happens when you see how it all came together as a flawless show with successful results. You forget about the months of hard work, because it all was worth it. Working with designers in general is a wonderful art, as you must learn how to combine the creativity of a designer with the business mind of a producer and strive for an overall successful show outcome in which all parties involved—including the audience and models—feel content and happy.”

While her career as a fashion show

producer flourishes, Maritta is hardly resting on her laurels. Instead, she pushes herself to create, innovate, and inspire. She is a true entrepreneur, and her many professional pursuits include brand development, public relations, creative directing, fashion styling, and motivational speaking.

She even launched her own label, MVDesigns, in August 2016, with a line of modern, edgy printed bodysuits.

Maritta has already accomplished incredible feats at a young age, so her career is certain to have many fascinating chapters to come. For now, though, her ambition, sincerity, and creativity have paid off, for herself, her collaborators, and for the designers whom she helps shine.

LEADERS IN **Agriculture**

CALS
ALUMNI
HELP
FEED AND
CLOTHE
THE WORLD

By Vanessa Beeson



ONE OF THE HIGHEST AND MOST NOBLE AMBITIONS is to feed and clothe the world—and that’s exactly what so many MSU College of Agriculture and Life Sciences’ alumni do every single day. It’s a humble endeavor and yet so many of our alumni build careers on finding ways to feed and clothe a growing population and do so with fewer resources, in less time, under greater environmental pressures. This day-in and day-out translates to careers that leave lasting legacies in the industries these alumni serve. Learn how Dr. Ryn Laster, originally a pre-law major, found her passion in poultry; how Ernie Barnes brought the bacon back to Main Street America; how Dr. Jack C. McCarty has anticipated the future of cotton for more than 40 years; and how third-generation dairyman, Will Gilmer, leverages technology to educate his customer base and elevate an industry.



From pre-law to poultry

WHEN DR. RYN LASTER STARTED out at Mississippi State, a career in poultry was the farthest thing from her mind. She pursued a Bachelor of Arts in English, minoring in foreign languages. She had hoped her undergraduate work would parlay into law school, which was something she'd dreamed of since high school.

"I went to law school for about three days when I realized it was truly not what I wanted to do," Laster remembers. "I grew up on a farm, and I decided I wanted to do something positive within the realm of agriculture. I looked at different majors, and chose poultry science because of the 100 percent job placement rate."

Laster earned a second bachelor's—this time in poultry science—in just three semesters. She graduated with that degree in 1993. She was offered an assistantship and stayed on for her master's degree in food science and technology, earning that in 1996.

After her master's, she held two jobs before finding a permanent home at Cal-Maine Foods. For nearly 20 years, she has served as director of food safety and animal welfare for the company, which is considered the largest producer of shell eggs in the United States. Cal-Maine Foods is headquartered in Jackson, Mississippi.

In 2005, two professors Laster knew well approached her about pursuing a doctoral degree. Since she'd taken more classes than required during her master's degree, she didn't have many courses left to earn a Ph.D. She and the professors, husband and wife, Drs. J. Paul Thaxton and Yvonne Vizzier Thaxton, formulated a program of study that allowed her to continue working fulltime at Cal-Maine while raising two children. She received her doctoral degree in food science, nutrition and health promotion with a poultry science emphasis in 2008.



At Cal-Maine, Laster oversees all of the company's food safety, animal welfare, *Salmonella* prevention, and biosecurity programs.

Laster says she is passionate about the role egg production plays in the bigger picture of food security.

"I serve on the Mississippi Food Network (MFN) Board of Directors. There are so many people who don't know where their next meal is coming from. Eggs, as a great source of protein at a low cost, are an important part of the equation when it comes to establishing food security in our state and across the country," Laster says. "We have an entire nation to feed with an increasing population. Finding ways to be a sustainable part of feeding our country is something I am passionate about."

In addition to her role with MFN, she was chairperson of the board for the Mississippi Poultry Association in 2010 and 2016. Laster also serves on the United Egg Producers Food Safety Committee and on the advisory board for the Department of Poultry Science. In addition, she is on the Senior Technical Advisory Committee for the Safe Quality Food Institute. Most recently, she was selected as an advisory board member of the newly formed Thad Cochran

Agriculture Leadership Program.

Laster has kept pretty busy on the home front as well. She says her family is her support system.

"My parents, Bob and Ann Laster live nearby, and I would not be where I am today without their support. My dad is an MSU alum, earning his undergraduate and master's degrees in industrial education. He worked for Siemens and the state department before retiring from Hinds Community College. My mother taught English at Hinds for over 40 years and is the author of a very successful technical English textbook. I have two daughters, Carlee, age 19, who is a freshman at MSU and Camryn, age 15, who is a sophomore in high school."

Laster credits her former mentor as helping pave the way for women in poultry and hopes she can pave the way even further.

"Yvonne Vizzier Thaxton was one of the first women in the poultry industry at the executive level. She truly shaped my career. When I was in the poultry science department as a student, there were only a few girls. Now, half of the students in the department are female. I am proud of that. There are tremendous opportunities for women, for everyone, in this field," she said.



Bringing home the bacon

WHEN MOST MISSISSIPPI STATE alumni think about the ringing of cowbells on a bright fall Saturday afternoon, a scrimmage on Scott Field immediately comes to mind. CALS alumnus, **Ernie Barnes** says the sound reminds him of a swine barn.

“Back when I was in school, you could hear the cowbells ringing on a Saturday afternoon from South Farm (H.H. Leveck Animal Research Center).

We’d be in the swine barn and our judging coach would say, ‘That’s right. Get fired up. We are going to judge ten or 12 more classes, then you all can go to the football game.’ We usually got

to most games about the start of the fourth quarter.”

The 1974 animal and dairy sciences graduate recalls his time as part of the Mississippi State Livestock Judging Team as one of the fondest memories of his life.

“The experience expanded my horizons so much. I was a small-town kid from Union County, Mississippi who got to travel to nearly twenty-five states for competition that year. I got to know people from all over the country.”

The livestock judging team is what initially attracted Barnes to Mississippi State.

“I knew I was going to be on the livestock judging team. I’ve had a love for

animals and loved that particular program. Mississippi State’s new livestock judging coach, Dr. Howard Miller from Southern Illinois, was already well known in the pork industry. I knew him by reputation and I just had to be on his judging team.”

Barnes grew up in the West Union/New Albany area on a small farm with a small herd of Hereford cattle and a few Yorkshire sows.

“My dad was a Baptist minister. He liked livestock almost as much as my younger brother and I did. We showed both pigs and cattle.”

Barnes’ passion for livestock led him to the pork industry. For the past 30 years, Barnes has been with the National Pork Board. In his current position he serves as director of producer services. He’s a central figure in the execution of the annual World Pork Expo, which brings 25,000 pork producers to Des Moines, Iowa each year. He also oversees three regional staff members tasked with making sure state boards and producers have what they need for the national organization. Another project he is heavily invested in, he says, is Operation Main Street. The program trains 1,300 pork producers on how to give speeches to groups in their local communities, including civic organizations, high schools, county commissions, dietetic groups, and more.

“Our pork producers are out there showing customers they care about the environment, the health and safety of their employees, their animals, and, most importantly, their communities and families,” Barnes said.

Even though Barnes and his wife, Paula, have been in Iowa for 30 years, raising both of their children in the Hawkeye State, they all still have close ties to Mississippi State. Both of his children attended Mississippi State; his son in the PGA Golf Management Program and his daughter for a kinesiology internship.



A geneticist eyes the future of cotton

SIXTH-GENERATION MISSISSIPPIAN, Dr. Jack C. McCarty, grew up on a farm in Clarke County, Mississippi. He has seen unprecedented innovation in agriculture in his 40-plus years as a research agronomist with the USDA Agricultural Research Service's Crop Science Research Laboratory.

"As a child, I remember when my father purchased the family's first tractor. Up until then, we plowed the soil with mules. During my life and career, changes in agriculture have been more dramatic than several hundred years prior to that."

McCarty has spent his career focused on cotton genetics. In 2016, McCarty was honored as Cotton Researcher of the Year at the World Cotton Research Conference in Brazil. The selection was made by the International Cotton Advisory, a committee of cotton experts representing major cotton producing countries. That international recognition is a testament to the years of McCarty's quiet dedication.

McCarty earned three degrees in agronomy from Mississippi State: his bachelor's in 1968, his master's in 1971, and his doctoral degree in 1974.

When McCarty began working as a researcher in the 1970s, the biggest pest to cotton was the boll weevil.

"I worked to develop host plant resistance from a breeding standpoint, trying to find cotton plants that were resistant to the boll weevil. We had some success in that," McCarty said. "After the boll weevil was nearly eradicated in the U.S., our research shifted to bollworms, plant bugs, and other pests as well as the management of nematodes."

Most of McCarty's breeding work in cotton focuses on developing genetic material called germplasm with useful traits that can then be passed on to cotton breeding companies. The breeding companies pick up those traits and incorporate them into cultivars or varieties,

and then they make those available to the farmers. In his nematode research, McCarty's work led to the development of genetic resistance to the important reniform nematode. Additionally, he developed more than 500 germplasm lines, which represented new sources of plant genetic resistance to insects, nematodes, and diseases.

McCarty has also been a leader in fiber research. He co-developed plant mapping technology that determined the economic worth of each boll on a cotton plant. The technology is used as a gold standard in settling legal disputes centered on cotton fruiting and retention.

McCarty served 29 years in the Air National Guard, retiring as Lieutenant Colonel. His two brothers both went into agricultural education, each earning advanced degrees from MSU; one brother was with the MSU Extension Service and the Mississippi State Plant Board (Robert H. McCarty died in 2000 and has a building on campus named after him), the other brother (Will) was the state cotton specialist for many years and retired as associate director of the MSU Extension

Service. McCarty's sister retired after teaching elementary education for 30 years.

"I'm the only one of my siblings still working."

And work he does. McCarty continues his research in nematode resistance, improved fiber quality, and genetic diversity. He's published 168 peer-reviewed manuscripts and 106 non-peer reviewed papers. He is a member of the graduate faculty at Mississippi State and has mentored 50 master or doctoral students as a member of their graduate advisory committee. During his career, McCarty has left an imprint as a leader in agriculture. His research has improved the genetics of the Mississippi's original cash crop, contributing to better, stronger plants, with greater resistance to pests and improved yield and fiber quality.

As a dedicated researcher and mentor training the agricultural leaders of tomorrow, McCarty has his eyes focused on the future of cotton. To sustain that future, McCarty recently established an endowed scholarship in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences for students studying agronomy.





The life of a dairyman

BY 8:00 A.M. FRIDAY MORNING, WHEN most people are settling into the office and checking email, **Will Gilmer** is already five hours into his 12-hour work day.

The third-generation dairyman and his father milk around 210 Holstein dairy cows seven days a week, 365 days a year. Gilmer graduated from Mississippi State in 2001 with a Bachelor of Science of Agricultural Engineering, Technology, and Business.

“We have what’s called a 14/10 rotation. Milking begins at 3:30 a.m. and starts again at 1:30 p.m.,” Gilmer says. “This schedule frees us up in the evening to spend time with our families and out in our communities.”

Gilmer likes to stay active in the Shiloh community of Lamar County, Alabama where the farm is located. Currently, he’s the president of his county’s Farm Bureau. He also submits a weekly agricultural article to the local newspaper, *The Lamar Democrat*. He has also spent time in the national spotlight. In 2010, he was the Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee Chairman for the American Farm Bureau. In 2015, he was one of the first “Faces of Farming and Ranching” as a national spokesman for

the U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Alliance. And he’s kind of a big deal on Twitter.

Gilmer Dairy’s social media following is vast. Will Gilmer’s over 11,000 Twitter followers nearly surpasses the population of the entire 600-square-mile county where the dairy farm is located.

That desire to inform the public about dairy farming, he said, began during his time at Mississippi State. He started out as a computer science major, but midway through his college career, he decided returning to help run his family’s dairy farm was his life’s ambition.

“As a student at MSU, I realized there was a need to educate the general public about life on a dairy farm,” he said. “Many of the students who weren’t in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences had no idea where their food came from.”

First, Gilmer created a website for the farm. Over time, Gilmer blogged about daily life on the farm. Once social media took off, he started to engage with people via Twitter.

“Now I am conscious of branding,” he says, “But it all began with a sincere desire to get our story out there and say here’s what we do. We want to be ethical and good stewards of the land and good caretakers of our animals. And we want

a good end product that we can enjoy with peace of mind.”

The farm has been in the Gilmer family for over 100 years. Will’s great-grandfather started the farm on land purchased from his father-in-law, planted cotton as a cash crop, raised livestock, and grew food crops to feed the family and animals. Will’s grandfather, Gray, the youngest of nine children, returned to the farm in the 1950s after a successful career with the Tennessee Valley Authority. Gray Gilmer transitioned the farm to focus solely on dairy. Once Gray’s son, David, finished at Mississippi State University (also a graduate of agricultural engineering, technology, and business), he returned to help his father run the dairy. A few decades later, Will did the same.

“I worked for my father for about four years. He wanted to make sure I was fully aware of what I was getting myself into. Then he took me on as a partner in 2005. That’s how the business is today—it’s a partnership between my father and me.”

Will says the dairy is more challenging today than it was when he graduated sixteen years ago.

“It’s a global market now and margins are razor thin. You have to be on top of what you are doing. You can’t leave much up to chance. You have to know what your costs are and what production you can expect. You have to be a sound business person. You can’t just milk cows,” Gilmer said.

The farm has about 435 Holstein cows on 600 acres of pasture. At any given time, the farm has around 220 milking cows and produces a little over 3,000 gallons of milk every two days.

The Gilmer Dairy Farm participates in the Dairy Farmers of America Gold Standard Dairy program, which also incorporates the National Dairy FARM Program. The voluntary on-farm audit assesses areas including animal care and wellness, environmental stewardship, employee training, and milk safety and quality.

Gilmer met his wife, Joni, while at Mississippi State University. Joni teaches first grade and the couple has one son, age 11 and a daughter, age seven.

Development



@CALSDeployment
@MSU Properties
@BulldogForest

MSU poultry house renovation emulates commercial setting

By Vanessa Beeson

A POULTRY RESEARCH FACILITY at Mississippi State's H.H. Leveck Animal Research Center was recently renovated to further research and education.

The newly-renovated facility includes an automated production system controller, cool cells, AV heaters, inlet machines, vent doors, energy-efficient insulation, larger experimental units, cabled feeder and drinker systems, and LED lighting.

The renovations were made possible through in-kind donations from six industry partners and the university's Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station. Donors included Acme Ag, which donated fans; Cumberland, which donated an edge controller, cool cells, heaters, inlet machines and vent doors; Valco, which donated drinkers, end kits, and regulators; Agri-business, which donated cool cell pads, winching material, and plumbing; Robinson Electric and Goodnight Electric, which donated electrical wire; and Insul-pro, which donated fiberglass spray foam walls.

Mary Beck, professor and head of the Department of Poultry Science, said the

renovation will help researchers better replicate the commercial setting.

"As one of six poultry science degree granting departments in the U.S., it is paramount that our research programs and teaching curriculum mirror current industry practices," Beck said. "This research facility has the tools and infrastructure necessary to mimic current state-of-the-art commercial poultry facilities."

Kelley Wamsley, assistant professor in poultry science, helped oversee the renovation and is conducting the first research trial in the facility.

The first trial evaluates how certain enzymes affect the performance and processing characteristics in male broilers. The trial is sponsored by the Mississippi Initiative for Poultry Industry Research.

"The house was designed with this first trial in mind and future trials to produce data that will directly benefit the Mississippi poultry industry. Also, with the installation of new and current equipment available to the industry, generated data will be more relevant to current industry practices as compared to other research facilities," Wamsley said.





The newly renovated poultry research facility allows research and teaching programs to mirror current industry practices. (Photo by Dominique Belcher)



New animal complex construction

THE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND Life Sciences and the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station are planning three separate buildings to house the expanding programs in poultry; animal and dairy sciences; and food science, nutrition and health promotion. All three buildings will be constructed on the corner of Stone Boulevard and Blackjack Road, in the lot located in front of the Wise Center.

The Meat Science and Muscle Biology Laboratory is currently under construction and should be completed by Fall 2017.

The 15,000 square foot building includes a harvest area, demonstration area and freezer space as well as classrooms and research laboratories.

A new Animal and Dairy Sciences building is slated for construction beginning June 1, 2017 with an expected completion date of Spring 2019.

The three story building will contain about 34,500 square feet of offices, conference rooms, classrooms, and labs.

The Poultry Science building is expected to bid by late fall 2017 with construction beginning in early 2018. The two story building will contain 26,500 square feet of offices, conference rooms, classrooms and labs. It is anticipated that the building will be complete by Spring 2020.

Naming opportunities are available and include the buildings, classrooms, conference rooms, laboratories, and offices. Interested individuals should contact Jud Skelton at 662.325.0643 or Will Stagers at 662.325.2837.

Cultivate estate planning and reap benefits

By Amy Cagle

THE BUSINESS OF FARMING can be a challenge, requiring considerable planning and carefully developed strategies. Farmers know that timely preparation is essential to optimizing outcomes. However, as the time for retirement nears, few farmers realize the wealth of opportunities available to assist with financial plans for the future.

The Mississippi State University Foundation's team of professionals is ready to help farmers develop an advantageous financial plan that can also involve a specific charity. In fact, establishing a charitable remainder trust (CRT) can lead to a mutually beneficial result for a donor as well as the preferred charity.

"For older farmers who are contemplating retirement, a CRT would be a viable option to provide them with certain tax advantages and great benefits," said **Jud Skelton**, director of development for the MSU College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and for real estate giving university wide.

Skelton grew up in the Mississippi Delta and graduated from Mississippi State. He joined the MSU Foundation in 2001. He continued, "For many, financial planning is not a luxury, but simply essential. With Mississippi State University, farmers and landowners can obtain a lifetime income through a charitable gift while also receiving certain tax benefits. Some sources for funding a CRT include real property—land, equipment, and grain—among other options."

Capital gains taxes are often a concern for many farmers who own appreciated

stock or real estate. Similarly, those who have recently sold appreciated property may be looking for a way to offset a current tax liability through a charitable deduction. As individuals approach their retirement years, it is crucial to evaluate available opportunities for securing and increasing income in the future. For all of these reasons, a CRT should be considered.

WHAT IS A CRT? A CRT is a tax-exempt trust that can be used to unlock the appreciation in property that has increased in value and provide a retirement income to the donor or loved ones for life or a term of years. When the trust terminates, the remaining assets pass to a charity. Since a CRT avoids capital gain tax on any property it sells, the property's full value is preserved for use in making distributions. Funding a CRT can often generate higher payments than if the property had simply been sold and reinvested. The donor also receives a partial, current charitable income tax deduction since the trust assets will ultimately go to a charity such as the Mississippi State University Foundation.

FLEXIBLE PAYOUTS WITH TAX REWARDS:

A CRT pays either a fixed amount (an annuity trust) or a variable amount (a unitrust) each year to one or more individuals (the trust beneficiaries). Unitrusts

have the potential to provide a stream of payments that grow over time if the underlying principal grows, and are well suited to gifts of real property or other complex assets. Unitrusts also offer greater planning flexibility. For example, property with little or no current income can be transferred to a unitrust and held until a future sale, after which payments to the beneficiaries increase to the full unitrust amount.

"Farmers and other individuals should always consult with their professional tax adviser or attorney for the latest information regarding estate planning and taxes. The Mississippi State University Foundation has professionals who are available to work with land owners and their advisers to explore the benefits of charitable remainder trusts and other charitable planning options," Skelton said. "There is no time like the present to consider charitable gift plans."

For a personal illustration regarding a CRT established through real estate, stock, or other means, contact Skelton at (662) 325-0643 or email him at jud.skelton@foundation.msstate.edu. For more information on supporting Mississippi State University through the MSU Foundation, visit www.msufoundation.com and request a copy of the university's Guide to Giving and Real Estate Guide to Giving.



Endowment memorializes couple's commitment to MSU

By Addie Mayfield

THROUGH THE SUPPORT of family and friends, the Gerald and Gale Taylor Scholarship in the Mississippi State University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences has recently been endowed, forever memorializing the influential couple for which it is named.

After earning a bachelor's degree in general agriculture from MSU in 1954, **Gerald Taylor** began his progressive career with the university Extension Service as the assistant county agent for Clay County, and later, Union County. In 1960, Taylor was appointed to the position of assistant dairy science specialist, where he led an outstanding 4-H dairy program for the state for nearly 20 years.

In 1970, Taylor earned his second MSU degree, graduating with a master's

in dairy science, and he was promoted to associate dairy science specialist for the Extension Service. The Mantachie native also served two years in the U.S. Army and was an active member of the Mississippi Association of County Agricultural Agents (MACAA), serving as the organization's president in 1982.

Following his retirement from the university in 1985, Taylor, along with his wife, Gale, avidly followed MSU sports, especially baseball.

The Gerald and Gale Taylor Annual Scholarship was initially established in honor of Gerald and in memory of Gale, who had passed away in March of 2015. After Gerald's passing later that year in September, friends and family agreed to endow the scholarship in memory of



the late couple.

"My parents loved everything maroon and white and MSU was the centerpiece of their social lives;" said the couple's son, Steve Taylor ('77, '81), who, along with his three siblings, followed his father's footsteps in joining the Bulldog family. "They would feel so honored and humbled by this scholarship and would be so very pleased that it will be used to assist MSU students for years to come.

Stephens family uses matching gifts to establish MSU scholarship

By Addie Mayfield

GREENVILLE RESIDENT WALT STEPHENS, along with his wife Melissa and son Rob, has established a Loyalty Scholarship in the Mississippi State University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

Stephens graduated with a bachelor's degree in agribusiness from MSU in 2007 after earning an associate's degree in business administration from Mississippi Delta Community College in 2005. The Benoit native currently serves as city president for Regions Bank in Greenville, a role he has filled since 2014. Prior to

joining Regions, Stephens worked as an admissions recruiter for the MSU Department of Agricultural Economics.

At MSU, the Walt and Melissa Stephens Loyalty Scholarship will provide annual support for entering freshmen and community college transfer students in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Candidates for the award must have demonstrated leadership ability and recipients may be considered to receive the award for up to four years of study, with the required 3.0 grade-point average.

"Mississippi State is a great university and is full of wonderful people that are willing to help when asked," Stephens said. "Matching gifts are a valuable way to contribute to that legacy because they help make a large impact even with gifts of smaller amounts."

By utilizing matching gifts from the Regions Financial Corporation Foundation and the MSU Bulldog Club, the impact of the Stephens family's gift was nearly

tripled. In addition to furthering contributions from alumni and friends, matching gifts also help to increase Mississippi State's ability to recruit talented students.

"We are grateful to the Stephens family for taking advantage of matching funds to grow this gift and create new opportunities in our college," said George Hopper, dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. "When alumni give back to MSU, students see firsthand the impacts made by those who were once in their shoes."

For more information on how matching gifts can help establish scholarships in the MSU College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, contact Will Staggers, the college's assistant director of development, at (662) 325-2837 or wstaggers@foundation.msstate.edu.

Faculty News

Richard L. Brown receives university's highest faculty recognition

RICHARD L. BROWN was named William L. Giles Distinguished Professor during MSU's 2015-16 Faculty Awards and Recognition Program. Though not a faculty rank, the Giles Professorship is a memorial to MSU's 13th president awarded on the basis of outstanding research, teaching, and service to individuals attaining national or international status. Brown, who has spent his entire 36-year academic career at the land-grant institution, directs the Mississippi Entomological Museum, a campus repository of approximately 1.5 million specimens that regularly attracts researchers from around the world. A Cornell University doctoral graduate, Brown also is a specialist in insect taxonomy and systematics in the biochemistry, molecular biology, entomology, and plant pathology department of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.



Risk management expert named head of MSU agricultural economics

A NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL EXPERT on agricultural risk management and crop insurance has been named head of Mississippi State's Department of Agricultural Economics. **Keith Coble**, a longtime faculty member in the department, has assumed the role as head after serving as interim head for the last eight months. A 19-year veteran of Mississippi State, Coble earned bachelor's and master's degrees in agricultural education from the University of Missouri. He earned a

doctoral degree in agricultural economics from Texas A&M University. A university William L. Giles Distinguished Professor, Coble also served as chief economist for Sen. Thad Cochran and the minority leadership on the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee during the most recent Farm Bill legislation. In addition to his work at Mississippi State, Coble also serves as vice president of the Starkville Oktibbeha Consolidated School District Board of Trustees.



MSU bioinformatics researcher's avian natural selection study published in 'Science'

THE UNEXPECTED FINDINGS of a two-nation research team including a Mississippi State scientist were featured in a leading academic journal. Genetic adaptations of hummingbirds to life at high altitudes where oxygen is less available are the focus of the 2016 report in *Science* authored by



Federico G. Hoffmann, in collaboration with academic partners in the U.S. and Denmark. Hoffmann is an assistant professor in the Department of Biochemistry, Molecular Biology, Entomology, and Plant Pathology. The research project was funded by grants from the U.S. National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation and Danish Council for Independent Research. The article may be read at <http://science.sciencemag.org/content/354/6310/336>. Hoffmann's colleagues included Chandrasekhar Natarajan and Jay F. Storz from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Roy E. Weber and Angela Fago from Aarhus University in Denmark, and Christopher C. Witt from the University of New Mexico.



CALS associate dean selected as SEC Fellow

SCOTT WILLARD, associate dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, was one of four Mississippi State administrators and faculty members among 52 selected as 2016-17 Southeastern Conference Academic Leadership Development Program Fellows. Through this academic initiative, the SEC works to sponsor, support, and promote collaborative higher education programs and activities involving administrators, faculty, and students.



Landscape Architecture professor named Outstanding Educator

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF Landscape Professionals Academic Excellence Foundation has named a Mississippi State landscape architecture associate professor as the 2016 Outstanding Educator of the Year. **Tim Schauwecker** was presented with the prestigious national teaching award in his own backyard when Mississippi State University recently hosted the 40th Annual National Collegiate Landscape Competition. The Educator of the Year Award recipient, nominated by a peer, is an individual whose passion, dedication, and hard work have contributed significantly to education in the landscape industry.

CALS Excellence in Teaching Awards

GRADUATE TEACHING AWARD, TEACHER OF THE YEAR



Dr. Richard Harkess, plant and soil sciences professor, received the Graduate CALS Excellence in Teaching

Award and CALS Excellence in Teaching Teacher of the Year Award.

LOWER DIVISION AWARD



Dr. Guihong Bi, research professor in the Department of Plant and Soil Sciences, received the

Undergraduate – Lower Division CALS Excellence in Teaching Award.

UPPER DIVISION AWARD



Dr. Chander Sharma, former assistant professor in the Department of Poultry Science received the

Undergraduate – Upper Division CALS Excellence in Teaching Award.

NEW FACULTY AWARD



Dr. Laura Lemons Greenhaw, assistant professor in the School of Human Sciences, received the New

Faculty CALS Excellence in Teaching Award.

CALS/MAFES Service Award

OUTSTANDING FACULTY SERVICE AWARD



Dr. Barry Barnett, professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics, won

the inaugural service award. He is an award winning teacher, an internationally recognized researcher, and a committed servant to the department, college, university, national policy makers, and profession. Barnett is past president of the Southern Association of Agricultural Economists, associate editor of the American Journal of Agricultural Economics, editorial board member of the Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics, chair and co-organizer of the Applied Risk Analysis section of the Agricultural and Applied Economics Association, panelist for USDA-NIFA and NSF awards, consultant to the World Bank and USAID, and advisor to the Federal Crop Insurance Board of Directors.

CALS/MAFES Diversity Award



Dr. Jonathan Pote, department head for agricultural and biological engineering, received the

Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning Diversity Award for Excellence, along with eight honorees from the state's other institutions of higher learning.

MAFES Grantsmanship Award



Dr. Ginger Cross, assistant research professor in the Social Science Research Center, received the

grantsmanship award. Cross was granted a total of \$676,466 in extramural funding during the 2015 calendar year.

MAFES Publication Awards

OUTSTANDING SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATION AWARD



Dr. Jesse Tack, former associate professor in the Department of Agricultural

Economics, received the Outstanding Scientific Publication Award for the research paper, "The Effect of Warming Temperatures on U.S. Wheat Yield," which was published in *The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. Coauthors include Drs. Andrew Barclay and Lawton Nalley.

MOST IMPACTFUL PUBLICATION AWARD



Dr. Dan Petrolia, associate professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics, received

the Most Impactful Publication Award, for the publication, "Wind Insurance and Mitigation in the Coastal Zone," which appeared in the journal *Land Economics*. Coauthors include Drs. Craig Landry and Keith Coble.

MAFES Excellence in Research Award

FACULTY EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH AWARD



Dr. Jason Krutz, associate research and extension professor at the Delta Research and Extension Center,

received the Faculty Excellence in Research Award, sponsored by the Mississippi Land Bank. His novel RISER program has actively engaged producers in the research process by using management as experimentation. In on-farm, head to head trials he has shown that the adoption of hole punch optimization software, surge valves, and soil moisture sensors can improve irrigation efficiency, reduce water usage by 28 percent and 42 percent in soybeans, and corn, respectively, while increasing profitability by \$30 per acre. His parallel work in rice has shown that adoption of side inlet irrigation systems can reduce water usage by 30 percent and profitability by \$52 per acre. These outcomes have led to astounding adoption rates among Delta producers. Over his career, Dr. Krutz has published 58 peer-reviewed journal articles, 63 other scientific publications, and 39 popular articles. In the last five years he has supported his research program with more than \$4.8 million in extramural funding.

MSU Awards

Dr. Raja Reddy, plant and soil sciences research professor, received the Regions Bank-Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine International Service Award.

Dr. Richard Harkess, plant and soil sciences professor, received the Regions Bank-Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine Teaching Award.

Dr. Brian Baldwin, plant and soil sciences professor, received the 2016 Outstanding Graduate Student Mentor of the Year Award from the MSU Graduate Student Association.

Marie Jeffries, business manager in biochemistry, molecular biology, entomology and plant pathology department, received the Doris and Louis Wise Support Staff Award.

Jesse Morrison, research associate in the plant and soil sciences department, was a recipient of the inaugural Stellar Staff Award.



Sonya Baird, research associate III in Dr. Shien Lu's laboratory, received the Research Support

Award. She is an author on 13 journal articles, 15 published abstracts, and one patent application.

Donna Morgan, poultry science research technician, received the Wise Award in the technical/paraprofessional category.

Study Abroad

Plant and soil sciences and human sciences students study agriculture in China

CALS STUDENTS visited Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden City, and Summer Palace while also going to universities, research centers, and farms to study Chinese agriculture. From left, **Dr. Guihong Bi** is shown in Tiananmen Square with students **Liz Wardell, Judson LeCompte, Jacob Oakley, Jason Morris, Jessi Collier, Oliver Wang** along with **Dr. Susan Seal**. (Photo by Nathan Gregory)



Horse judging team holds clinics in Europe

DR. CLAY CAVINDER, an animal and dairy sciences associate professor, students, and staff shared the American tradition of Western horseback riding during European clinics in summer 2016. Funded by the American Quarter Horse Association, Cavinder and his team led clinics in Austria, Italy, Germany and Slovenia. Seniors **Hannah M. Miller** of Starkville, **Samantha G. Miller** of Sylvan Springs, Alabama, and **Ashley Palmer** of Jackson were the clinic assistants.

MSU students attend world cotton conference

FACULTY AND DOCTORAL STUDENTS in the departments of biochemistry, molecular biology, entomology, and plant pathology and plant and soil sciences attended the 2016 World Cotton Research Conference in Goiânia, Brazil. Faculty included **Jeffrey Dean, Angus Catchot**, and **Darrin Dodds**. Students included **Nick Bateman, Whitney Crow, Ben Thrash, Adam Whalen, Lucas Franca**, and **Michael Plumlee**. The team attended the conference, which was coupled with the Biennial Conference of the International Cotton Genome Initiative, two of the largest cotton research events in the world. The team also toured several producer farms in Brazil as a teaching opportunity and in order to better understand insect and agronomic issues that might help inform future problems and practices for producers in the Mid-south.



Animal and dairy science students visit Vietnam

FACULTY, STAFF, AND STUDENTS from the Department of Animal and Dairy Sciences went to Vietnam this past summer. **Dr. Thu Dinh**, assistant professor in the department, led the trip. He was accompanied by **Jessica Graves**, an animal and dairy sciences instructor, and animal and dairy sciences students **Olivia Cohn-White** and **Whitney Littlejohn**. The purpose of the trip was to gain insight on the meat science industry and Vietnamese cuisine.



Poultry science students learn about New Zealand poultry industry

FACULTY AND STUDENTS from the Department of Poultry Science spent several weeks during the summer of 2016 in New Zealand. The team toured poultry facilities in the country.

MSU team visits Hobbiton in Matamata, New Zealand. Left to Right: Abby Case, Dr. Kelley Wamsley, Katie Roper, Dr. Mary Beck, Katie Oakley, Chrysta Beck, Danelle Moffett, Dr. Aaron Kiess, Brandon Dickinson, Gil Odem, Dr. Tom Tabler, Rosana Hirai, and Christopher Thompson.



Landscape architecture team in Amsterdam

STUDENTS AND FACULTY from landscape architecture spent three weeks in Europe during the summer of 2016. Students pictured at the Museumplein in Amsterdam include (left to right) **Nick Chastain, John-Taylor Corley, Danielle Casteneda, Georg Detz, Ben Webster, Ben Collins, and Jacob Felkins**. The students studied in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Utrecht. They also went to Alphen aan den Rijn to look at Ecolonia, one of the first ecological communities designed in the Netherlands.

Student News



Leake Co. senior at MSU receives national research recognition

SENIOR MATTHEW A. TUCKER of Carthage took second-place honors in oral presentation during the National Student Research Symposium Contest. The event in Minneapolis, Minnesota, was part of the joint annual conference of the American Society of Agronomy, Crop Science Society of America, and Soil Science Society of America. Tucker, a plant and soil science major concentrating in golf and sports turf management, is a President's List Scholar at the university, as well as a member of the Phi Kappa Phi national honor society chapter. Tucker's work involved an examination of screening methods for water stress in seedlings and identification of drought-tolerant lines of tall fescue and bermudagrass. Germination is a crucial point in the lifetime of a plant and, by finding ways to test for water stress, his investigation may help plant breeders as they work to produce improved varieties of grasses.



MSU landscape architecture students win national design competition

IMPLEMENTATION HAS BEGUN on the initial phase of the 2015-16 Come Alive Outside Design Challenge winning design created by Mississippi State undergraduate and graduate landscape architecture students.

Now in its third year, the competition challenged MSU students, along with teams from Auburn University, Hinds Community College, and Louisiana State University, to design an outdoor spot that would help the Memphis Catholic Middle School and High School better utilize existing greenspace.

The competition was organized and executed in partnership with nonprofits Come Alive Outside of Asheville, North Carolina; and The Kitchen Community of

Boulder, Colorado; along with Memphis-based landscape design/build firm Michael Hatcher and Associates. **Cory Gallo**, associate professor of landscape architecture, served as the faculty adviser for the MSU team comprised of graduate students **Opeyemi T. Bakare** of Nigeria; **Michael P. Keating** of Starkville; **Yazan Mahadin** of Jordan; and **Ying Qin** of China. Gallo said three undergraduate students also took advantage of this learning opportunity by voluntarily assisting with the project in their spare time. They included **Justin J. Gandy** of Starkville; **Elizabeth L. "Lis" Robison** of West Point, also pursuing a bachelor's in landscape contracting; and **Abbey K. Wallace** of Madison.

Students honored with prestigious MSU assistantship

LUCAS X. FRANCA AND JOHN T. BUOL received the university's Will D. Carpenter Distinguished Field Scientist Graduate Assistantships. Franca, a doctoral student from Brazil, is studying weed control in cotton under the direction of **Dr. Darren Dodds**, associate extension and research professor in the plant and soil science department at MSU. Buol, a master's student from Monroe, Wisconsin, is investigating cotton's susceptibility to auxin herbicide injury. His work is directed by weed science professor, **Dan Reynolds**, holder of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences' Edgar E. and Winifred B. Hartwig Endowed Chair in Soybean Agronomy. The Monsanto Co.-funded award is named for the 1952 MSU agronomy graduate who spent 34 years with the Missouri-based multinational agrochemical and agricultural biotechnology corporation. Carpenter retired in the early 1990s as vice president and general manager of the new products



division. As part of the assistantship, Franca and Buol are paired with Dr. Anthony Mills, who holds the title of Monsanto Distinguished Field Scientist and is a weed management technology development representative with the company's Memphis, Tennessee, operation.

MSU students awarded precision agriculture scholarship

FOUR STUDENTS in Mississippi State University's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences are receiving precision agriculture scholarships this year. Precision agriculture is a method that utilizes cutting-edge technology to pinpoint what a field needs to produce the largest amount of food and fiber. Through the use of sensors that detect differences in soil type, moisture, and other environmental conditions, scientists are discovering new ways to provide farmers with tools to maximize yields. Funded by Monsanto Company, the scholarships help students further their studies in precision agriculture as it applies to their respective academic major. In turn, the work they do is expected to further the field of precision agriculture. Current recipients include (by hometown):

- **Jeffrey Mansour** (Greenville, MS), a master's student in plant pathology;
- **John Murray** (Newbern, TN), a freshman agronomy major with an integrated crop management concentration;
- **Jake Hall** (Saulsburry, TN), a freshman agricultural engineering technology and business major;
- **Evan Gregory** (Sturgis, MS), a senior agribusiness major.



MSU freshman awarded National Black Farmers Association scholarship

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY agribusiness student **A.J. Bland** is among 21 U.S. students to receive a National Black Farmers Association scholarship. Bland, a Tunica native, is the recipient of a \$5,000 scholarship that will help him pursue his degree in agribusiness. The FCA Foundation, the charitable arm of automotive company FCA US LLC, and the National Black Farmers

Association recently announced the scholarship recipients. The \$100,000 in scholarships awarded by the two organizations will help students pursue agriculture-related degrees. Bland, who grew up on a family farm, is the only Mississippian in the 2016 cohort of NBFA scholarship recipients. In addition to studying agribusiness, Bland is pursuing a minor in accounting.



Students and faculty honored at Beltwide Cotton Conference

FOUR MISSISSIPPI STATE STUDENTS and a faculty member are award winners at the 2016 Beltwide Cotton Conference. All are affiliated with the agronomy program of the university's plant and soil sciences department. The visual display category, MSU student winners included:

- Senior **Savana S. Davis** (Pungoteague, Virginia) first in the undergraduate division;
- Doctoral candidate **Chase A. Samples** (Starkville) first in the agronomy and physiology section of the graduate division; and
- Doctoral candidate **Michael T. Plumblee**, second in the agronomy and physiology section of the graduate division.
- In the graduate-level oral presentation competition, doctoral student **Lucas X. Franca** (Starkville) placed third. **Darrin Dodds**, adviser for all four, received the conference's Dr. J. Tom Cothren Outstanding Young Physiologist Award. Indiana-based Dow AgroSciences sponsors the Cothren Award as a memorial to a well-known Texas A&M professor and physiologist.



MSU undergrad takes cardiovascular research to heart

KELLIE MITCHELL, Mississippi State biochemistry major, is conducting research she hopes will one day help save lives. By studying the heart cells of swine with metabolic syndrome, the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences student is working to unlock clues to help detect heart disease in humans. Mitchell is part of the Undergraduate Research Scholars Program, an immersive experience designed to engage undergraduate scholars in research and creative activities beyond the traditional undergraduate curriculum. In this 12-month experience, undergraduate students work as a junior colleague within a faculty scholar/mentor's research program to discover new knowledge, enhance their discipline-specific expertise and gain critical thinking skills. Funded through the university's Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station, 40

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences undergraduate students are currently participating in the program. The heart disease research project received additional funding from MSU's Office of Research and Economic Development and through a special research initiative funded by the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station. Mitchell's research specifically examines exosomes in healthy and unhealthy cells. She is working under the direction of **Yuhua Farnell**, assistant professor in MSU's Department of Biochemistry, Molecular Biology, Entomology, and Plant Pathology, and **James Stewart**, assistant professor in the Department of Biological Sciences. **George Eli Howell, III**, assistant professor in the College of Veterinary Medicine, and **Dan Zhao**, a doctoral student studying molecular biology, also are providing guidance.

MSU landscape architecture hosted National Collegiate Landscape Competition

MISSISSIPPI STATE'S Department of Landscape Architecture hosted the 40th annual National Collegiate Landscape Competition in March on the Starkville campus. Sponsored by the Herndon, Virginia-based National Association of Landscape Professionals Inc., the NCLC and MSU welcomed 750 students

enrolled in interior and exterior horticulture programs at two- and four-year colleges and universities across the country. In addition to encouraging fellowship through a variety of competitive landscaping activities, this year's event included a networking fair, where students had the opportunity to discuss career

opportunities with landscape industry professionals from more than 70 companies. Associate professor **Tim Schauwecker**, who also serves as the MSU landscape architecture department's landscape contracting and management program coordinator, said his department was pleased to celebrate the NCLC's 40th anniversary on the very campus that served as the competition's first host.



MSU entrepreneurial team develops nutrition 'Panacea'

A MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY student team's business venture may be one solution to nutritional deficiencies the state's school children face. The team of students in MSU Department of Food Science, Nutrition and Health Promotion proposed a business to produce a cost-effective, sweet-potato-based powder they have named "Panacea." Team members include **Morgan Von Staden** of Olive Branch, Mississippi; graduate student **Liz Ivey** of Cumming, Georgia; and graduate student **Hector Portillo** of Sarasota, Florida. Panacea would be produced



using culled sweet potatoes, mixed with other ingredients such as applesauce or yogurt, and sold to cafeterias to increase the nutritional value of school lunches.



Graduate Research Award

SANDRA SCHACHAT, master's candidate in the Department of Biochemistry, Molecular Biology, Entomology, and Plant Pathology, received the ORED/DAFVM Graduate Research Award. She is the recipient of a Smithsonian Institute Graduate Student Fellowship, and NSF Graduate Research Internship, and an NSF Graduate Research Fellowship. She has been the first author on eight of her nine scientific articles in prestigious journals including *Conservation Biology*, *PLoS One*, and *the International Journal of Plant Sciences*. She has co-authored 13 published abstracts, and given numerous papers, for which she has received five best papers awards at international meetings. Her research focuses on the evolutionary ecology of insects and is being conducted in Australia, New Zealand, and at the Smithsonian. Schachat also received the Master's Graduate Research Assistant of the Year Award from the MSU Graduate School.



MSU-led design project selected for prominent New York exhibition

THE OKTIBBEHA COUNTY Heritage Museum's SuperUse Pavilion, a part of the museum's rain garden program that has benefitted from the efforts of more than 100 Mississippi State undergraduate and graduate-level students, recently has been selected for exhibition at the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum in New York City. The SuperUse Pavilion's selection recognizes the efforts of MSU students studying architecture, art, building construction science, graphic design, landscape architecture, and landscape contracting who designed and built the museum's new event and exhibition pavilion. As a component of the larger museum grounds improvement project, the pavilion joins additional sustainable design features, including a 700 square-foot rain garden, 200 square-foot sand filter, 1,000-gallon rainwater cistern, an American Disabilities Act-compliant museum entrance, along with more than 1,000 square feet of new landscape plantings.



Webster County student at MSU tops in regional design competition

A MISSISSIPPI STATE rising senior from Eupora is the first-place winner in the 2016 New Orleans Fashion Week student designer competition. **Jesse D. Newton**, a fashion design and merchandising major in the university's School of Human Sciences, had entered a silver and white outfit pairing an asymmetrical jacket and skinny-leg pants. Taking place recently at the New Orleans Board of Trade on Magazine Street, the sixth-annual event

showcased talents and collections of established and emerging fashion designers, brand houses, boutiques, retailers, models, and hair and makeup artists in a series of runway shows, fashion events, and exhibitions. Newton, an MSU President's List Scholar, said his winning entry originally was for a class taught by visiting professor Catherine Black in which members were required to create a miniature collection over the semester.

Olive Branch native at MSU leads global food science student association

IN 2016, a student in Mississippi State's Department of Food Science, Nutrition, and Health Promotion was named president-elect of the Institute of Food Technologists Student Association. **Morgan E. Von Staden**, a senior from Olive Branch, holds a three-year term on the international food science organization's board of directors, serving one year each as president-elect, president, and past-president.



Students Compete in RICE Bowl competition at UMMC

GRADUATE STUDENTS from Mississippi State's Department of Food Science, Nutrition, and Health Promotion participated in the third annual Rural Interdisciplinary Case Experience (RICE) Bowl in Jackson in Oct. 2016. Sponsored by the Myrlie Evers-Williams Institute for the Elimination of Health Disparities at the University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC), the RICE Bowl is designed to unite a diverse pool of graduate students from multiple academic disciplines to address complex rural health issues. The competition provides an experiential learning opportunity for students to work in interdisciplinary teams to effectively address a realistic case scenario. Students are encouraged to think comprehensively and beyond their own disciplines. As a result, students are better prepared to work in interdisciplinary teams to provide the highest quality care to individuals and populations. **Dr. Diane Tidwell**, food science, nutrition, and health promotion professor, served as a judge for the Rice Bowl and MSU dietetic intern **Nita Puri** participated on the winning team.

4th Annual Future of Agriculture Graduate Student Competition

IN FEBRUARY 2016, more than 40 MSU students gathered to provide insight into leading-edge agricultural research currently being conducted at Mississippi State. These scholars and researchers, all pursuing advanced degrees in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, showcased their research projects, academic acumen, and presentation skills. Winners include (left to right): **FIRST ROW: Justin McCoy** tied for second place in the master's competition 2, **Shane Carver** placed third in the new student competition, **Jenny Bibb** placed first in the new student competition, **Whitney Crow** placed first in the Ph.D. competition, **Richard Lee Atwill II** placed second



in the Ph.D. competition, **Stephen Leininger** tied for second place in the master's competition 2. **SECOND ROW: Jake McNeal** placed first in the master's competition 2, **Jeffrey Mansour** placed third in the master's competition 1, **Adam Whalen** placed second in the new student competition, **Ben Thrash** placed third in the Ph.D. competition, **John Buol** placed first in the master's competition 1, and **Chad Abbott** placed second in the master's competition 1. Read more about these students at cals.msstate.edu/students/ag_feature_2016.asp.

Human Sciences degrees rank in the Top 50 nationally

According to a report from www.fashion-schools.org, the university's fashion design program is 39th overall and sixth in the South. For fashion merchandising, MSU is 40th nationally; 9th in the South. Additionally, the university has been ranked #31 as a great value college for Family and Consumer Sciences. The ranking was created based on master's and doctoral degree opportunities, research opportunities, and internship and scholarship opportunities, to name a few.

Research Award Competition



BIOCHEMISTRY

MAJOR WHIT ABLES received third place in the Southern Division American Phytopathological Society Graduate

Student Research Award Competition. Ables's presentation was entitled, "Dissemination of novel ectotrophic root-infecting fungi associated with bermudagrass via vegetative propagation from sod production in the Southeast." He is advised by Maria Tomaso-Peterson, associate professor in the Department of Biochemistry, Molecular Biology, Entomology, and Plant Pathology.



Public health-focused MSU grad student earns national honor

A **MISSISSIPPI STATE DOCTORAL STUDENT** is among five who received a 2016 scholastic honor from the Entomological Society of America. **José Santos Portugal III** was awarded a \$500 research grant by the society's medical, urban, and veterinary entomology section. A Euless, Texas, native, he is an entomology major in MSU's Department of Biochemistry, Molecular Biology, Entomology, and Plant Pathology in the university's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Portugal entered MSU after graduating from Texas A&M University. What began as his pursuit of a master's degree under extension professor **Jerome Goddard** evolved into doctoral-level study. Portugal's research is focused on medical entomology, the study of insects, and other arthropods that transmit pathogens.

MSU grad students participate in Three Minute Thesis competition

AN **80,000-WORD THESIS** would take nine hours to present, but nearly 50 Mississippi State graduate students recently had less than three minutes to convey their months or years of complex research during the university's fourth annual Three Minute Thesis competition. Sponsored by the Office of the Graduate School, the 3MT competition is open to all graduate students in good academic standing. Students may compete in arts and humanities; life and biomedical sciences and engineering; physical, mathematical, computational sciences and engineering; or social and behavioral sciences. **Caitlin J. Wenzel**, a master's student studying veterinary medical science, was named the Grand Champion. Her research talk, "IV Magnesium Sulfate: A Rescue for Horse & Human Asthmatics," earned a \$1,000 prize. Also an animal and dairy



sciences bachelor's graduate of MSU, Wenzel will advance to the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools (CSGS)

3MT Regional Finals held next March in Annapolis, Maryland. **Abbey E. Wilson**, a life sciences/animal physiology doctoral student, summarized her research in a three-minute talk titled "Linking Chemistry to the Behavior of Giant Pandas," which the audience voted as the People's Choice Award winner. Wilson received

a \$500 award. **John T. Buol**, a master's student in plant and soil sciences/weed science, was named a finalist for his research talk, "Keep Cotton Out of the Weeds—The Hormonal Way."



Batesville student named MSU's first Gates Cambridge Scholar

A **SENIOR BIOCHEMISTRY MAJOR** at Mississippi State has been named the university's first recipient of the prestigious Gates Cambridge Scholarship. **Lucas J. Ferguson** of Batesville, a 2016 Judy and Bobby Shackouls Honors College Outstanding Research Award recipient, is among 36 selected to receive one of the most generous international scholarships awarded by the University of Cambridge.



Other Award Winners

Chad Abbott, agronomy graduate student, placed first in the poster competition for the Crop Society of America.

Izabella Gomes Almeida, an animal and dairy sciences major, received second place in the Biological Sciences and Engineering section for her poster presentation at the MSU Undergraduate Research Symposium.

Firas A. Alsajri, a plant and soil sciences/agronomy doctoral student, won second place in the Mississippi Academy of Sciences graduate student poster competition.

Lee Atwill, agronomy graduate student, placed second in oral competition for the American Society of Agronomy.

Agronomy master's student, **John T. Buol**, placed second in both the Weed Science Society of America master's poster contest and the Southern Weed Science Society oral presentation contest.

Doctoral agronomy graduate, **Gary T. Cundiff**, placed first in doctoral paper presentation at the Weed Science Society of America.

Harmon Duke, a junior landscape architecture major, received third place in the Social Sciences section for his poster presentation at the MSU Undergraduate Research Symposium.

Doctoral candidate in agronomy, **Lucas X. Franca**, placed second in the Weed Science Society of America doctoral poster presentation.

Agronomy doctoral student **Lucas Franca** placed second in the Ph.D. Student Poster Competition, Section #2, for the Weed Science Society of America.

Kaitlyn M. "Katie" Hill, a biochemistry major, placed second in the MSU Undergraduate Research Program Symposium.

Stephen Leininger, agronomy master's student, placed first in the poster competition for the American Society of Agronomy.

Jacob McNeal, agronomy graduate student, placed first in the oral competition of the Southern Regional Branch of the American Society of Agronomy.

Kellie A. Mitchell, a biochemistry/pre-medicine major, placed first in the MSU Undergraduate Research Program Symposium.

Doctoral agronomy candidate, **David P. Russell** placed third in the Weed Science Society of America doctoral poster presentation and second place in the Southern Weed Science Society doctoral oral presentation contest.

Ahmed Chalooob Saddam, a food science, nutrition, and health promotion/nutrition doctoral student, won first place in the Mississippi Academy of Sciences graduate student poster competition.

Saroj K. Sah, a molecular biology doctoral student, won third place in the Mississippi Academy of Sciences graduate student poster competition.

Bhupinder Singh, agronomy graduate student, placed first in the poster competition at the Southern Regional Branch of the American Society of Agronomy.

Ciarra N. Smith, a sophomore biochemistry major, received first place in the Biological Sciences and Engineering section for her poster presentation at the MSU Undergraduate Research Symposium.

Jessica N. Smith, senior agricultural education, leadership, and communications major, received first place in the Arts and Humanities section for her poster presentation at the MSU Undergraduate Research Symposium.

Richard Smith, agronomy master's student, placed first in the master's student paper competition for the American Society of Agronomy.

Shackouls Honors College senior in the Department of Food Science, Nutrition, and Health Promotion, **Alesa Taylor**, won the Weed Science Society of America undergraduate research award.

Xi Wang, an agricultural science/poultry science major received the Ph.D. Graduate Research Assistant of the Year award from the MSU Graduate Student Association.

Steven Chris Wilhelms, 2015 graduate of environmental economics and management from the Department of Agricultural Economics, received the MAFES/CALS Undergraduate Research Award.

Doctoral agronomy student, **Wilks Wood**, placed first in the Ph.D. Paper Competition for the American Society of Agronomy.

The **Mississippi State University National Agri-business Marketing Associate team** made it to the semi-finals in the quiz bowl competition. They finished in the Top 12 of 30 teams.

The **Mississippi State University Weed Team** recently placed third in regional competition. The team competed among a field of 16 teams, representing seven universities at the Southern Weed Contest. Team members include: **Zac Carpenter**, **David Russell**, **Tyler Hydrick**, and **John Buol**. Plant and Soil Sciences faculty **Paul Tseng** and **Dan Reynolds** are the team coaches.

Alumni News



SAMMY BLOSSOM (Bachelor of Science, Animal and Dairy Sciences, 1970) was presented with the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation's Distinguished

Service Award. The accolade is the organization's highest honor. Blossom recently retired after 16 years as the head of the Mississippi Cattlemen's Association. Blossom grew up on a farm in Scott County where his family raised dairy, beef, and sheep. His interest in livestock grew from there and as a youth he was actively involved in FFA. He earned a Bachelor of Science in Animal and Dairy Sciences and spent seven years managing cattle farms in Mississippi and Kentucky before coming onboard at the Mississippi Cattlemen's Association and Mississippi Beef Council.



HAROLD GARY (Bachelor of Science, Agriculture and Extension Education, 1960) was elected president of the National Association of Rural Rehabilitation

Corporation at its annual conference in Tampa, Florida. He is also vice president of the Mississippi Rural Rehabilitation Corporation and serves on the board of directors of the Pearl River Basin Development District, Southwest Mississippi Resource Conservation and Development Council, and the Forestry Association advisory board.

LISA YONGE LACY (Bachelor of Science, Home Economics, Marketing, 1990) released "A Promise on Brushy Creek" in April 2016. Based on the lives of her paternal ancestors, the book weaves together true stories and fiction to create an engaging tale of the past. The first published work of the Stoneville resident

is available in hardcover, paperback and e-book editions. She is a member of the adjunct faculty in the Division of Family and Consumer Sciences in the College of Education and Human Sciences at Delta State University.



CATHERINE MONTGOMERY (Bachelor of Science, Nutrition, 2012; Master of Science, Health Promotion, 2014) is the programs manager and a

registered dietitian for the Mississippi Food Network. She has been working and volunteering for the food bank since 2011. She became a full-time staff member at MFN in 2014.



TRAVIS B. MOORE (Bachelor of Science, Master of Science; Agricultural Economics; 1984, 1986; Bachelor of Business Administration, Banking

and Finance, 1984) was inducted into Mississippi Business Journal's Leaders in Finance program, which recognizes individuals who exhibit exceptional professional accomplishments and active citizenship. He is regional president of The Citizens Bank, Hattiesburg.



SHANE PHIRI (Master of Agronomy, Department of Plant and Soil Sciences, 2015): is managing director and part owner of Global Seeds, a small seed

company in Malawi that grows and sells foundation seed. Phiri earned a Bachelor of Science in Agribusiness Management from the University of Malawi. In addition to being an agricultural entrepreneur providing foundation seed to

Malawian farmers, he hopes to one day teach at the university level.



CHRISTIAN PREUS (Bachelor of Landscape Architecture, 2002) was awarded the inaugural Young Alumnus of the Year by the College of Agriculture and Life

Sciences in 2016. Preus is the owner and principal of Christian Preus Landscape Architecture (CPLA), a design and planning firm with offices in Ocean Springs, Mississippi, and Fairhope, Alabama. While attending MSU, the Webb, Mississippi native was an active member of the Sigma Chi Fraternity, and was inducted in the Honor Societies of Phi Kappa Phi, Order of the Omega, and Mortar Board. As a junior, Preus was selected as one of only 19 students from around the world to participate in the prestigious EDAW Summer Student Program where he worked in Atlanta, South Beach Miami, and Denver on the redevelopment of the Stapleton Community. During his senior year, Preus served as the president of the Student Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects and was acknowledged with the ASLA Honor Award and the Charles E. Parks award for the Most Outstanding Senior in Landscape Architecture. In 2002, Preus graduated magna cum laude.

CPLA's most notable works include the site designs for the MGM Minor League Baseball Stadium in Biloxi; the Mississippi GRAMMY Museum in Cleveland; and Florence Gardens, an award-winning traditional neighborhood development in Gulfport. The firm has developed the master plan for Adelaide, a 486-acre community in Starkville; campus plans for Starkville Academy; and Lynn Meadows Discovery Center in Gulfport. CPLA is

currently working on projects such as Dudy Noble Field on the Mississippi State University campus, the Mississippi Arts and Entertainment Experience in Meridian, the Mississippi Aquarium in Gulfport, and a site restoration plan for the Charnley-Norwood Residence—a fully restored Frank Lloyd Wright/Louis K. Sullivan designed home in Ocean Springs. Their design for Lighthouse Park in Pascagoula, Mississippi recently received the Honor Award from the Mississippi Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects in 2016.

Preus has served as an executive officer in both the Mississippi and Alabama Chapters of the American Society of Landscape Architects. Currently, he is serving as a Board Member for the Mississippi Heritage Trust, and on the Advisory Board for the Department of Landscape Architecture at MSU. He and his wife Brooke live in Fairhope, Alabama with their three children, Braden, Madeline-Hart, and William. They are members of Eastern Shore Presbyterian Church and are actively involved in Young Life.



MEAGAN SCOTT (Bachelor of Science, Human Development and Family Studies, 2002; Master of Science, Agricultural and Extension Education, 2004)

joined the North Dakota State University Extension Service as a 4-H youth development specialist and assistant professor in the Center for 4-H Youth Development in Fargo. She earned her doctoral degree in agricultural education from Oklahoma State University in May 2016. At OSU, she was awarded a 2016 Phoenix Award from the OSU Graduate and Professional Student Government Association as well as the 2016

Outstanding Doctoral Student award from the university's Department of Agricultural Education, Communications, and Leadership. She previously spent more than eight years as an extension 4-H youth agent in Pearl River County.



HUGH SUMMERVILLE

(Bachelor of Science, Agriculture, 1968) was named to the Cotton Inc. Cotton Research and Promotion Hall of Fame. Now in its second year, the hall of fame recognizes industry leaders who made significant contributions to the field.



DR. BROOKE UPTAGRAFFT

(Bachelor of Science, Biochemistry, 2003) runs a medical practice that has served the Huntsville, Alabama area since 2011.

Her practice, BrookeMD Primary Care, was named the 2016 Medical Practice of the Year by the Chamber of Commerce at the Huntsville/Madison County's Small Business Awards Celebration.



TOM WHARTON (Bachelor of Science, Master of Science, Agronomy, 1985, 1988) was named national sales manager for FMC Corp.'s North America

Professional Solutions, which comprises FMC's turf and ornamental and structural pest solutions segments.



TYRONE A. WILLIAMS,

(Bachelor of Science, Agricultural Engineering Technology and Business, 1989) has been elected president of the Board of Governors

of the Capital Club of Jackson, Mississippi. He has been a member of the club for 17 years, and a member of the Board of Governors for four years, previously serving as secretary-treasurer, and vice president.

His fulltime employment is as a lieutenant colonel with the Mississippi Air National Guard. He holds a Master of Science degree from Air University's Air Command and Staff College. He is currently pursuing a doctoral degree in public policy and administration from Jackson State University's College of Public Service.

He is a veteran of Operations Just Cause, Desert Shield/Desert Storm, Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, Joint Task Force—Horn of Africa, and the European Strategic Inter-theater Deployment. In 2009, he served as the Division Chief, Logistics Operations Division, Logistics Directorate, United States Central Command Air Force Forces, Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar.



SCOTT WRIGHT, (Bachelor of Science, Agronomy 2001; Master of Science, Agriculture, 2006) was named Enlist field specialist by Dow AgroSciences.

He serves the Mid-south as a member of a team of regional experts supporting the Enlist weed control systems.

OBITUARIES

C. HUNTER ANDREWS (Bachelor of Science, Master of Science, Doctorate; Agronomy; 1954, 1958, 1966; former faculty) age 83, died May 5, 2016, in Starkville, Mississippi. A graduate of the U.S. Army Artillery School, Anti-aircraft and Guided Missiles Branch, he served as a first lieutenant. He was a member of Mississippi State's faculty until 1995 and worked extensively with the U.S. Agency for International Development in South America, Africa, and Asia. He was a member of the American Society of Agronomy for 56 years. He was also a member of the Crop Science Society of America, Soil Science Society of America, Phi Kappa Phi honor society and Kappa Sigma fraternity.

ARCHIE BATSON (Bachelor of Science, Animal Husbandry, 1964) age 74, died February 25, 2016 in Wiggins, Mississippi. A fourth-generation farmer, he established ABC Cattle Co., and focused on polled Brahman cattle, setting the standard for the breed. Named Outstanding Young Farmer in 1966 and Mississippi Cattleman of the Year in 1981, he served the Stone County fair board and Cattlemen's Association. He worked to introduce children to farming by helping establish Stone County Kindergarten Farm Day and the Stone County Junior Livestock Association. For 26 years, he also provided livestock for a four-day, living nativity scene for the community.

HARRY RAYMOND BOSCHERT (Bachelor of Science, Animal Science, 1955) age 82, died December 4, 2015 in Greenville, Mississippi. A Korean War veteran, he served as a captain in the U.S. Army. He spent 30 years farming his family land in Bolivar County until he furthered his career with Staplco. He was active in many organizations, including the Rotary Club, Farm Bureau and the Washington County Alumni Association, which he twice served as president.

JERRY M. BRISTOW (Bachelor of Science, Agriculture and Animal Husbandry, 1954) age 83, died May 14, 2016 in Tupelo, Mississippi. A veteran of the Korean War, he worked as a real estate appraiser and enjoyed tending his land called Bristow Acres.

DEBRA LIPE DAWS (Bachelor of Science, Landscape Architecture, 1983) age 56, died August 25, 2015 in Greenville, Mississippi. She a longtime member of St. Joseph Catholic Church and graduated from St. Joseph Catholic School before attending Mississippi State.

NORMAN HERSCHELL DUNCAN (Bachelor of Science, Dairy Science, 1951) age 92, died October 20, 2014 in Olive Branch, Mississippi. A U.S. Army veteran who served in World War II, he retired as a salesman from Universal Foods.

EDWIN WAYNE DULANEY (Bachelor of Science, Agricultural Engineering, 1968) age 71, died June 13, 2016 in Clarksdale, Mississippi. A farmer, he was a member of the Elk Lodge and the Delta Council.

RICHARD GLEN EAVES (Bachelor of Science, Dairy Science, 1953; Master of Science, History, 1960) age 83, died April 10, 2016 in Knoxville, Tennessee. After earning his bachelor's degree, he served in Korea and Japan in the Army. He earned his first master's from Peabody College in Nashville before returning to MSU for a second and eventually earning a doctoral degree from the University of Alabama. He taught for 16 years at Auburn University before becoming dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Mississippi College.

CLINTON H. GRAVES, JR. (Bachelor of Science, Botany, 1950) age 89, died August 9, 2016 in Starkville, Mississippi. He earned a doctoral degree from the University of Wisconsin where he was a Rockefeller Scholar and Research Foundation Fellow. He joined the plant pathology faculty at MSU in 1953 where he remained until his retirement in 1992. During his career he authored or co-authored more than 170 research publications and earned many professional awards. He played piano for Men for the Master of First United Methodist Church. He was also a member of the Kiwanis Club and Faith Baptist Church.

F. RAY HARVEY (Bachelor of Science, Agronomy, 1959) age 80, died April 2, 2016 in Tallahassee, Florida. Hired by Mississippi Chemical Corp. immediately following his graduation, he served the company as a field representative for 40 years. He was an active member of St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Tallahassee.

MIKE HURT (Bachelor of Science, Agricultural Economics, 1998) age 45, died April 27, 2016 in Yazoo City, Mississippi. A native of Starkville he joined Rich-N-Tone Calls following his graduation and was still employed in the outdoor industry.

JAMES ARTHUR "ART" MASSEY, JR. (Bachelor of Science, Animal Science, 1954) age 83 died April 27, 2016 in Germantown, Tennessee. He served in the U.S. Army Special Forces and the 82nd Airborne Division. He began a career as a stockbroker with Francis I. Dupont and Co., later becoming the agricultural and area development manager of the Memphis Area Chamber of Commerce. He served on the boards of the Mid-south Fair and Memphis AgriCenter. He spent 28 years with Belz Enterprise as a director of the industrial division.

RAY H. MEANS, JR. (Bachelor of Science, Animal Husbandry, 1957) age 80, died June 7, 2016 in Lake Mary, Florida. The holder of two patents, he designed and implemented construction and managed installation of equipment into beef, pork, and seafood facilities across the Americas and the Caribbean. He served as director of operations at Hardee's/FFM processing products for the food service industry. As vice president of operations for Mitsui, he was the first to successfully develop a process for producing and marketing shelf-stable tuna products. Following his retirement, he oversaw catastrophe assessments for insurance adjustors in Louisiana, Puerto Rico, and islands in the Caribbean. He was a member of Kappa Sigma.

DEANA RUTH MILSTEAD MEARS (Bachelor of Science, Agriculture Communications, 1990) age 46, died March 25, 2016, in Baldwin, Mississippi. She was a support therapist for Timber Hills and served as a counselor for Crisis Intervention. She was a member of Mt. Olive Baptist Church.

WILLIAM R. MEREDITH JR. (Bachelor of Science, Master of Science; Agronomy; 1956, 1957) age 84, died July 2015, in Greenville, Mississippi. He was a research geneticist for the federal government at Stoneville for 46 years. After receiving his degrees from Mississippi State, he went on to earn a doctorate in plant genetics from Cornell. He taught at MSU for two years before moving to the Delta. He was the only twice-awarded recipient of the Cotton Genetics Award by Cotton Inc. In 2001, he was recognized as Senior Research Scientist of the Year. He served as deacon chairman and Sunday school teacher at First Baptist in Greenville.

CHARLES L. SCIPLE (Bachelor of Science, Agricultural Economics, 1950) age 90, died Sept. 5, 2016 in Starkville, Mississippi. He served in WWII and received a Purple Heart, Bronze Star, and numerous other commendations. He also served in the Korean War and received two Purple Hearts. He was a member of the Mississippi Agricultural Club, Cattlemen Association, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Mississippi Employees Retirement Association, and Sessums Community Club.

JEAN K. SNYDER (retired faculty) age 95, died February 24, 2016 in Starkville, Mississippi. A lifelong student of home economics, she earned a bachelor's degree from Pennsylvania State University, a master's from Cornell and a doctoral degree from Florida State. After holding teaching positions at several universities, she came to Mississippi State in 1971 to be head of the home economics department. She retired from MSU in 1985 as associate dean of agriculture and home economics. She was active in many national professional organizations and local civic clubs, holding leadership positions including president of the National Council of Administrators of Home Economics and a board member for the chamber of commerce and United Way.

GERALD TYSON TAYLOR (Bachelor of Science, General Agriculture, 1954; Master of Science, Dairy Science, 1970) age 83, died September 28, 2015, in Starkville, Mississippi. Following his graduation from Mississippi State, he worked with the Cooperative Extension Service in West Point before serving two years in the U.S. Army. He returned to the MSU Extension Service as assistant agent in Union County before joining the MSU Extension Staff as assistant dairyman. He led a 4-H dairy program for 20 years.

CHARLES H. THOMAS (retired faculty) age 93, died October, 2015 in Starkville, Mississippi. He retired in 1987 after more than 30 years of teaching genetics to agricultural, biological science, and pre-medical students at MSU. His work with students outside of poultry science earned him the nickname "Chicken Thomas." A native of Georgia, he held degrees from the University of Georgia and North Carolina State University. He was adviser to Blue Key honor society and a WWII veteran.

JOE B. THOMPSON (Bachelor of Science, General Agriculture, 1950) age 89, died January 20, 2016 in Bassfield, Mississippi. He attended Mississippi State after receiving an honorable discharge from the Navy. After earning his degree, he began a 40-year teaching career in the Jefferson Davis County school system. In addition to teaching veterans through the Veterans Training Program, he taught science and later moved into administration. The baseball field at Bassfield High is named in his honor, and he was active in many public service roles.

EMMETT TYNES (Bachelor of Science, Master of Science; Agriculture and Extension Education; 1948, 1954) age 95, died April 26, 2016, Brandon, Mississippi. A veteran of the U.S. Navy, he retired from the Soil Conservation Service after 32 years. He then worked in real estate as a hobby. He was a member of Gideons International and the masonic lodge.

Super Bulldog Weekend

April 16, 2016

1. Harold Grier, the first African American doctoral graduate in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences pictured with U.S. Representative Gregg Harper and CALS dean George Hopper.



2. Dan Batson, horticulture alumnus receives Alumni Award



3. Michael Lewis, animal and science alumnus (left) recognized by CALS Dean George Hopper.



4. Christian Preus, landscape architecture alumnus, is surrounded by his family as he receives the CALS Young Alumnus of the Year award.



5. Tony Windham, agricultural engineering technology and business, recognized as an Outstanding Alumnus.



Homecoming

November 30, 2016



1. Agricultural economics associate professor Dan Petrolia visits with associate provost Peter Ryan.

2. John Tomlinson (center) retired director of Government Support is honored for his friendship to CALS by MSU President and CALS alumnus Mark Keenum and Dr. George Hopper.

3. Bob Dunlap (center) President and CEO of Dunlap & Kyle Company and longtime friend of CALS honored by Dr. Mark Keenum and Dr. George Hopper.

4. Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine Vice President Greg Bohach visits with recruiters Allison North and Cory Bailey.

5. CALS ambassadors are ready to greet and serve.



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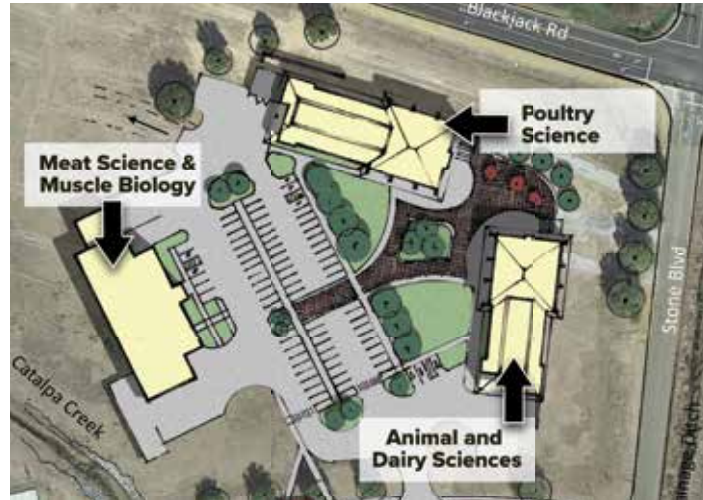
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FOR OUR NEW FACILITIES!

- The **Meat Science and Muscle Biology Laboratory** should be completed by Fall, 2017. The 15,000 square foot building includes a harvest area, demonstration area and freezer space as well as classrooms and research laboratories.
- A new **Animal and Dairy Sciences** building is slated for construction beginning June 1, 2017 with an expected completion date of Spring 2019. The three story building will contain about 34,500 square feet of offices, conference rooms, classrooms and labs.
- The **Poultry Science** building is expected to bid by late fall 2017 with construction beginning in early 2018. The two story building will contain 26,500 square feet of offices, conference rooms, classrooms and labs. It is anticipated that the building will be complete by Spring 2020.



MEAT SCIENCE AND MUSCLE BIOLOGY LABORATORY

Naming opportunities are available and include the buildings, classrooms, conference rooms, laboratories and offices.



If interested, contact:
Jud Skelton: 662.325.0643
Will Staggers: 662.325.2837



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