



Keeping you connected

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April 2023

U of A
DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System

No. 4

2023 Retiree Reception and Luncheon held at Benton Event Center



Retirees gather at the Benton Event Center and hear Division updates from Dr. Bob Scott.

Extension retirees gathered March 30, 2023, at the Benton Event Center for their annual retiree luncheon and scholarship presentation.

The day began with registration and visiting, a time for retirees to reminisce and reconnect. The program that followed included the presentation of four retiree scholarships, guest speakers, and an update from extension director Dr. Bob Scott.

Leigh Ann Bullington, FCS educator, and county agents Jessica Rodriguez and Danielle Watson demonstrated how to make sweet potato soup and offered samples.

Josiah Lillard and Jack Berryhill, 4-H Tech Changemakers, presented about cybersecurity, password protection, and phishing.

Four scholarship recipients were also honored. Extension retirees awarded \$850 scholarships to Amanda Welch, Katie Cullum, Keith Statham-Cleek, and Rebecca Simon.



Retirees pose for a group photo at the 2023 Retiree Reception & Luncheon

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Extension Retiree Scholarships awarded for 2023

Extension retirees awarded \$850 scholarships to **Amanda Welch**, 4-H program associate at the Little Rock State Office; **Katie Cullum**, county extension agent - Family & Consumer Sciences in White County; **Keith Statham-Cleek**, instructor - EFNEP at the Little Rock State Office; and **Rebecca Simon**, instructor- Family Life/Early Childhood at the Little Rock State Office. Recipients were recognized at the retiree luncheon March 30th at the Benton Events Center.



Amanda Welch has served as a 4-H program associate for over three years. She is pursuing a Master of Science degree in Health Education and Promotion from UA Little Rock to enhance her ability to grow and nurture the 4-H Health program in Arkansas.

In a letter of recommendation, a colleague of Amanda's wrote that "I was pleased when Amanda announced she would pursue her Master of Science degree in Health Education and Promotion because I am confident she will give back to the CES organization utilizing the skills and tools she will gain through her study."



Katie Cullum has been with Extension for over 25 years and is pursuing a Ph.D in Family & Consumer Sciences Education at Texas Tech University. Katie, who is currently a county extension agent - Family & Consumer Sciences in White County, aspires to learn more and help teach even more people about FCS and living well upon completion of her degree.

In one of Katie's letters of support, the writer shared this: "It is with great pride and "big-sister" watchfulness as I watch Katie go forward in building her educational horizons to better benefit her clients and her chosen career path, U of A Division of Agriculture."



Keith Statham-Cleek has been with Extension for 19 years and currently serves as an EFNEP instructor. He is pursuing a Ph.D. in Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences with Agricultural Education, Communications and Technology Concentration (AFLSPH-AECT) at the University of Arkansas. He plans to use his degree to better serve Extension and improve the quality of lives of Arkansans.

Keith's colleague shared that "Keith's knowledge, communication and presentation skills, and perseverance have made each of his endeavors a success. He has spent the last five years customizing nutrition education programming to the needs of limited resource audiences. Keith's passion for Extension work is exemplified by his strong work ethic which will lead to his successful completion of this advanced degree."



Rebecca Simon has been with Extension for over 16 years and currently serves as an instructor - Family Life/Early Childhood. She is pursuing a Ph.D. in Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences with Agricultural Education, Communications and Technology Concentration (AFLSPH-AECT) from the University of Arkansas to enhance the early childhood education and family life programs developed and implemented in her role as instructor.

In a letter of recommendation, a colleague of Rebecca's wrote that "She is respected by agents, state office staff, other contractors, and providers alike. She has helped create a great reputation for University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service childcare programming. When childcare providers see the Best Care logo, they know they will be receiving training that is useful and worth their time."

Visit the [Retiree Luncheon Photo Album](#) to see more!



Allan Beuerman and Jim Geisler catch up



Sharon Reynolds and Janet Carson watch a cooking demonstration



Alberta James, Relda Washburn, Shirlye HopKins, and Janet Hill visit



From left; Debbie Henry, Liz Childs, Darlene Millard



Jack Berryhill presents tips for password protection



Tom Leslie



From left; Danielle Watson, Jessica Rodriguez, and Leigh Ann Bullington prepare a cooking demonstration



Josiah Lillard plays a "phishing" game with the audience as part of his cybersecurity presentation

Message from the director



I was able to take a break from the budgeting process this month to attend a couple of great events. One was the Support Staff Conference, which was held at the 4-H Center this year and for the first time since 2019 offered an in-person option. It was well

attended both in-person and online. I appreciated the opportunity to speak to this group of co-workers who often do not get the credit that they richly deserve. I have been very lucky throughout my Extension career to have outstanding administrative help and will always do what I can to help make their jobs easier if possible. This was a good opportunity for this group to meet and collaborate.

I was also honored this month to say a few words at the groundbreaking ceremony for the new Extension offices in Greene County. It was a nice afternoon, and what a tremendous show of support from that county and the city of Paragould for our Extension team and their programs. It is no small feat to come up with funding for a new building these days due to rising construction costs, and this project has been many years in the making. I want to express our sincere appreciation to Greene County Judge Rusty McMillon and all the other folks involved in making this possible.

On my way to visit the beginning of a new office in Greene County, I made a quick stop at our newest county office in Jackson County. This building has also been over a decade in the making (for me at least), and I am very proud to see it almost finished.

Post-COVID, I have to say we are seeing a lot of support coming from our counties for the Extension Service. I think it speaks to the value that our presence brings to the county. We have worked very hard to establish these positive relationships, and I hope we can continue to be partners well into the future.

I know several of you are wondering when we will get a replacement for Brian Helms in our Development Office. This position, along with a few others at the Division level, is being evaluated by upper administration. We hope to build a team to work together and better explore all the resources and opportunities that are out there and foster more collaboration between CES, AES, Campus, and 4-H. I am currently working with Dr. Fields on developing a position announcement that fits into this plan, and we hope to post something soon.

It was good to see you all at the Retiree Luncheon late last month. I hope you are all OK after the rough weather we have experienced and are able to get out and enjoy spring.

The University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture offers all its Extension and Research programs and services without regard to race, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, disability, marital or veteran status, genetic information, or any other legally protected status, and is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

May Birthdays

Eva Johnson - May 1	Harold B. Williams - May 18
Paul E. Cooper - May 2	Deborah Ann Dority - May 18
Richard A. Klerk - May 3	William L. Russell Jr. - May 19
Shirley Shelton West - May 5	Teresa H. Booth - May 21
Glenda Sutherlin - May 6	Vicki June Brakefield - May 21
Kim Hughes - May 7	Charlotte Freeman - May 22
Gustav Marvel Lorenz III - May 9	Kathryn P. McElderry - May 23
Earl W. Wilson - May 10	Donald Ray Johnson - May 24
Terrence Kirkpatrick - May 10	Dana Stringfellow - May 25
Lillie Teel - May 10	Faye Suitt - May 26
Donna B. Swift - May 11	James R. Peachey - May 28
Kristopher Paul Rutherford - May 11	Larry Smith - May 29
Robert H. Rhodes - May 12	Jane M. Newton - May 29
Clyde Stuart Jr. - May 17	Donald Adren Slate - May 30
Dianna Gayle Cox - May 17	Darlene Zeh Millard - May 31
Debie Head - May 17	



May Plant Sales

May 6: Madison Co MG Plant Sale, Huntsville
May 6: Pope Co MG Plant Sale, Russellville
May 6: Stone Co MG Plant Sale, Mountain View
May 6: Union Co MG Plant Sale, El Dorado
May 6: Van Buren Co MG Plant Sale, Clinton
May 12-13: Crittenden Co MG Plant Sale, Proctor
May 13: Drew Co MG Plant Sale, Monticello
May 13: Greene Co MG Plant Sale & 25th Anniversary Celebration, Paragould
May 13: Faulkner Co MG Plant Sale, Conway
May 13: Polk Co MG Plant Sale, Mena
May 13: Madison County MG Plant Sale, Kingston
May 19-20: Benton Co MG Plant Sale and Expo, Bentonville
May 20: Logan County MG Plant Sale, Paris
Visit the [MG Plant Sales Page](#) for details!

Scholarship donations

The following gifts were recently received to support professional development opportunities for Extension faculty and staff.

CES Retiree Scholarship

Don Plunkett