



Keeping you connected

extension cord

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Carla Vaught Serves as a Trailblazer for Female Extension Ag Agents

Carla Vaught began her college career dreaming of being a veterinarian, not working as an extension agent. She began her education at Southern Arkansas University, then transferred to the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville to finish her bachelor's degree in animal science.

"I figured out early on that I wouldn't have any fun in college if all I was doing was trying to get into vet school, so I switched to animal science," Vaught said.

It wasn't until she took a particular class that she thought of a career in extension.

"I had an intro to extension class, and my professor really encouraged me to look into this job field," Vaught said.

She began in August of 1985, working in Madison County. It was supposed to be a temporary position that would last only a year.

"1985 was a year for major budget cuts at the federal level and there was a huge hiring freeze," Vaught said. "I finished school in July, and they opened the freeze long enough to get me hired."

That one-year trainee position morphed into a seven-year position. She transferred to Crawford County to work under Berni Kurz, then made her way to Logan County for a year and a half before ending her career in Polk County.

"I always said I'd wanted to retire in Polk County, since it was only an hour from my hometown," Vaught said.

Vaught worked 33 years for extension before she retired in 2018. After working with numerous 4-H programs and specializing in agriculture, she said her favorite part was the people she worked with along the way.

"You have to like working with people on the staff level, in the community, schools, church and other areas," Vaught said. "As a county extension agent, you have your finger in



Carla's horse, Colors Couture.

so many different things."

She said that the variety in her daily activities made her job that much more exciting, but she was ready for a slow down when she made the decision to retire. When asked what she has done since 2018, her first answer was "rested."

"That was really high on my list," she said. "I just wanted to be able to sit down and drink my cup of coffee. Not having to hurry to have to be somewhere in the morning is pretty awesome."

She has also started investing in things that didn't get much attention while she was working full time.

"I spent the first year working on my house, since there were some major remodels that needed to be done," Vaught said.

She divides her time among some interesting endeavors, including teaching and deliveries.

"I do all kinds of stuff. Last summer I worked for the census, and I also substitute teach," Vaught said. "I recently

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wrapped up making deliveries for UPS during the peak Christmas season.”

She never runs out of ideas for how she can use her free time. She has even spent time flying throughout the United States with puppies.

“I am a flight nanny for puppies when purchased by someone across the country,” Vaught said. “I pick puppies up at the airport, fly with them to their new owners and drop them off to their forever homes.”

She says flying with puppies is a rewarding but challenging job.

“It’s really fun, but it can be stressful. I am always worried about the puppy getting sick or staying quiet, and there are so many restrictions with the airlines,” Vaught said.

She mainly works with popular breeds like Labradoodles and other crossbreeds that are typically expensive. Her travels have taken her near and far for these puppies to make it to their new families.

“I did a haul up to Milwaukee once, and I also flew to New York for puppies headed to Pennsylvania,” Vaught said.

Her love for animals goes beyond flying with puppies.

Vaught also owns and shows horses, which is something she’s been doing since she was a kid.


“I’ve got three mares that have a very trendy bloodline, and I like to show them in ranch classes mostly,” Vaught said.

It’s a love that she’s had since she was 10 years old, and her dad’s words of wisdom have always stuck with her.

“My dad always says I have too many horses, and he likes to say that I can only ride one at a time,” Vaught said. “But I have different horses for different needs.”

Vaught started off with extension as a temporary trainee, and that blossomed into a 33-year career. She’s proud to have been a leader in Extension, since there were few female ag agents when she began her extension career.

“Female ag agents weren’t the norm at all,” Vaught said. “There were a lot of barriers broken, and I enjoyed being a trailblazer for the girls in agriculture.”

Making history and pushing the boundaries was just a part of what she contributed to extension. Vaught served in multiple counties over the years, making them each better in their own way. She is truly a pioneer. 

Division of Agriculture releases 2 new wine grapes

Two new wine grapes from the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture offer novel commercial options that are adapted for growing in Arkansas vineyards.

Indulgence is a white wine grape that produces wines with a muscat flavor, said John Clark, Distinguished Professor of horticulture and fruit breeding for the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station, the research arm of the Division of Agriculture.

Renee Threlfall, research scientist in the division’s department of food science, said Indulgence produces wine with floral, fruity and herbal aromas.

Dazzle is a pink grape that produces a white Gerwurztraminer-type wine, Clark said. Threlfall added that it has a spicy aroma in addition to the floral, fruity and herbal aromas.

Indulgence and Dazzle expand options for commercial production in Arkansas and other areas with similar growing conditions. Threlfall said both grapes can produce single-varietal wines or can be blended with other wines

to enhance their flavors or aromas.

Indulgence and Dazzle follow the rich, red Enchantment and the neutral white Opportunity, the first two wine grapes from the Division of Agriculture’s fruit breeding program.

Clark said the original crosses to produce these grapes were made by the late James N.

Moore, who founded the Arkansas fruit breeding program in 1964.

“Many Mid-South, Midwest, eastern U.S. and Arkansas wineries are using French-American hybrids or wine grapes developed in New York that are not ideal for Arkansas,” Clark said. “Dr. Moore’s aim was to develop good quality grapes with substantial flavor that could grow in Arkansas’ environmental conditions.”



Wine grapes, cont.

“Developing a wine grape just takes a long time,” Clark said. “It requires years of input from industry to develop and advance breeding lines toward a grape that meets their needs.” Clark added that wines must be made and tested to make sure they’re not only desirable to consumers, but also stable and consistent in storage, handling and serving.

Moore worked with the late Justin Morris, a division food scientist who specialized in viticulture and worked on vineyard management and winemaking for Arkansas. Their partnership lasted many years and continues today in the hands of Clark and Threlfall, who began their careers in Arkansas under Moore’s and Morris’ mentorship.

“These wine grapes are truly heritage projects,” Clark said.

At harvest, Indulgence averages 37 pounds per vine. Its muscat flavor is strong in the juice at crush, Threlfall said, and it was consistent in all years. Juice yield is one gallon for 13 pounds of fruit, and it averages 37 pounds of fruit per vine.

“For wine production, Indulgence needed sugar additions most years and acid additions some years,” Threlfall said. “Ethanol levels of wines were 10-12 percent.”

Dazzle makes about a gallon of juice from 14 pounds of fruit, Threlfall said, and averaged about 22 pounds of fruit per vine.


“Flavor is light, semi-fruity, reflective of its Gerwurztraminer parent, and was consistent in all years,” Threlfall said.

“For wine production, Dazzle usually did not need sugar or acid additives,” she said. “Ethanol levels of wines were 10 to 12 percent.”

“Soon, wine enthusiasts can purchase bottles of Indulgence and Dazzle wines, not only to enjoy the unique aromas and flavors, but also for the experience of drinking these wines made from grapes developed in Arkansas,” Threlfall said.

“Imagine drinking a wine that was made in Arkansas, with grapes grown in Arkansas, and that the grapes for the wine were bred in Arkansas.”

Powdery mildew was seen on Indulgence in four out of 26 years of observation for disease and in two out of 22 years on Dazzle, Clark said. Downy mildew was not observed in either grape, even in heavy years for the disease. Black rot and anthracnose also were not observed. Fungicides were used in research vineyards, and these varieties will need disease control similar to most bunch grapes.

Dazzle and Indulgence are available for license to propagators. Interested parties should contact Cheryl Nimmo at 479-575-3953 or by email at cnimmo@uark.edu for license availability. 


To our Extension retirees

First, let me say congratulations to all our retirees and to Brian Helms for doing a great job this past year on the CES Retiree Scholarship gifts. It’s one thing to set a record for giving, but to do it during a pandemic is really a positive story to tell. I am so pleased that our previous employees think highly enough of Extension to give their time and money to this and other great causes. It says a lot about our people and their belief in and dedication to our mission.

We continue in February to operate under COVID-19 protocol. We are focused on what we can do now, and our program specialists and county agents are working to fulfill our mission. We cannot sit back and wait on a time when we can meet in person; however, we are thinking about and planning for a time when we find the new normal. In some areas, we know we have some catching up to do. We have also learned much from our time working remotely, and those lessons will make us a better extension service.

Under the state’s vaccine plan, extension employees became eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine in January and will receive the second dose later this month. In cooperation with

UAMS, the Little Rock State Office hosted a vaccine clinic for extension employees who work at LRSO and in surrounding counties as well as a separate clinic for UALR folks. The event was a huge success, and UAMS officials told us our site was one of the best-run mobile clinics they have had. In true extension fashion, I offered use of LRSO as a site for additional clinics when more vaccine becomes available. Other than a sore arm, I was fine. If you have questions or concerns about COVID vaccines or COVID-19 in general, you can find resources on our website at uaex.edu/vaccine.

Once again, I want to thank you all for your support, patience and kindness during this time. I feel we can see the light at the end of the tunnel. It is my mission to have an even better, stronger and more efficient extension program when we do return to normal. As always, we love hearing from our retirees with advice or observations that might be helpful. You can start with me — (bscott@uada.edu)! 



March Birthdays

Peter Faison - March 1	Bonita Mueller - March 10	Chris Russell - March 18	Ocsie Barnes - March 26
Ralph Tyler - March 1	Dorothy Rodgers - March 12	Nina Boston - March 19	Thomas Moody - March 27
Lynn Whitlock - March 1	John Baker - March 13	Danny Walker - March 21	Debbie Henry - March 28
Janet Hill - March 3	Danny Ray Allen - March 14	Steven Seideman - March 22	Celia Boon-Shireman - March 29
Glenda McLaughlin-Rushing - March 5	Sue Seevers - March 14	Charlie Parsons - March 23	Eddie Hubbell - March 29
Sandra Schlinker - March 5	Judy Drewrey - March 14	Mary Barrentine - March 23	Patsy Hall - March 29
Barbara Tompkins - March 9	Dorene Wills - March 16	John Robinson - March 24	Shelly Johnson - March 30
Bobbie Floyd - March 10	Lydia Guffey - March 16	Ronnie Bateman - March 24	Karen Fite - March 31
Alene Bates - March 10	Doris Markle - March 17	Kathy Rawlingson - March 25	

Scholarship donations

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

Extension Service Retiree Scholarship Fund

Tom Leslie

In Memory of Earlton Sanders

Frank Plafcan

Rich Poling

Amy Hedges

In Memory of Dr. Anne Sortor

Donna L. Graham

In Memory of Larry Pitman

Honorary or memorial donations should be forwarded to the Development Office, ATTN: Brian Helms, Cooperative Extension Service, 2301 South University Ave., Little Rock, AR 72204. If joint recognition is desired, please indicate. To ensure proper notification is sent, please also include in whose honor or memory the gift is made and the mailing address of the person to receive the notification.

Mary Shaver Passes

Mary Shaver, 86 of Jonesboro, Arkansas passed away on Jan. 26, 2021. Mary spent most of her career working in Craighead and Cross counties. In retirement, Mary volunteered with St. Benards Medical Center, St. Benards Village, The Food Pantry and her church, First United Methodist Church in Jonesboro. Funeral services were held on Jan. 29 with burial at Jonesboro Memorial Park.

Carolyn Hester Passes

Carolyn Hester, 84 of Wynne, Arkansas passed away on Jan. 25, 2021. Carolyn retired from teaching school before starting her career with Extension in Illinois and Arkansas. Carolyn served as a county extension agent – FCS in Cross County before retirement. She wrote and published three children's books. Graveside services were held on Feb. 6 at Finch Cemetery in Paragould, AR.

Larry Pitman Passes

Larry Pitman, age 85, of Brookland, Arkansas passed away on Feb. 8, 2021. Larry retired from Extension after 34 years. Larry was an area livestock specialist. Arrangements are entrusted to Emerson Funeral Home of Jonesboro. ☹

Record year for CES Retiree Scholarship gifts

Extension retirees gave \$6,024 to the CES Retiree Scholarship Endowment in calendar year 2020. This surpasses the previous highest year of giving by over \$1,000. "The amazing generosity and commitment of our Extension retirees is second to none," Director of Stakeholder Relations Brian Helms said. These gifts will support scholarships for Extension employees to further develop their professional skills for the betterment of the employee and Extension. Twenty-three scholarships have been awarded since 2009. The CES Retiree Scholarship Endowment has now surpassed \$54,000. The interest earned from the endowment funds the annual scholarships. ☹

Welcome new retirees!

Anna Landrum, Pulaski County

Anna began her career in April 1997 and retired on Jan. 15. She was the administrative support supervisor in the Pulaski County office and retired with 23 years of service.

LeAnna Hicks, Phillips County

LeAnna Hicks began her career in September 2001 and retired on Jan. 16. She was a program associate with the EFNEP Program in Phillips County and retired with 19 years of service. ☹

Pursuant to 7 CFR § 15.3, the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture offers all its Extension and Research programs and services (including employment) without regard to race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, disability, marital or veteran status, genetic information, sexual preference, pregnancy or any other legally protected status, and is an equal opportunity institution.