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**UofA**  
DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE  
RESEARCH & EXTENSION  
University of Arkansas System

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No. 1

## Frances Story: 25-year career opened opportunities

Frances Story's unique appreciation for the work of the Cooperative Extension Service began in 1981 at the Miller County office. She worked in various positions for 10 years before spending one year in the business office. In 1992, when Dr. Milo Shult became vice president of the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture and moved the office to Little Rock, Story had the opportunity to work creating and designing that office.

Being in Little Rock also gave her the opportunity to fulfill a lifelong dream: to go to college.

As the fourth of seven children, Story had grown up on a cotton and soybean farm in rural Phillips County. Attending college wasn't a feasible option in the mid 1960s for her; instead, she focused on her career and raising her two daughters alongside her husband.

She tried to further her education many times, but after having to leave the course enrollment line to pick up her children from school, she decided to set her goal aside until the timing was right.

"I always wanted to have more education," she said. "I was always curious. It always felt like everybody knew something that I didn't know, and I was just too curious to let that slide."

When she finally had the opportunity to attend the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, she had been out of school for nearly 30 years.

"I didn't know if I could do college work or not, so I took one class. I aced it, and I thought, 'Okay, maybe I can do this,'" Story said.

She continued in college, taking two classes each semester and one in the summer. During this time, she also continued working and would often leave the office and go straight to the English building in her work clothes. After nine years, she graduated with a bachelor's degree in English with an emphasis on technical writing and a minor in speech communications.

"I never regretted it, and it was a lot of work," she said.

In 2006, Story retired from the UA Systems Office. After 25 years of work, she claims to have one of the best careers in the Division because she gained an appreciation for the work from many perspectives. In the county office, she saw the positive impact extension had on families through 4-H, Extension Homemakers and agriculture demonstrations. In the business office, she learned the logistics, and through the vice president's office, she learned how the programs were supported through state and federal legislation.



She believes the mission behind extension remains consistent despite technological advancements and career positions, which is part of the reason why she describes her career as so rewarding.

Until recently, Story lived near the University of Delaware. For several years, she hosted international students studying at the English Language Institute. She welcomed students from 10 countries into her home to fully immerse in American culture. Story also participated in the university's Master Gardener programs and often walked to the campus's creamery and botanical gardens.

Additionally, Story worked part-time as secretary of her church for 10 years. She enjoys the opportunity to make friends and get to know others. She is grateful for the way it placed her in a position to help those in need in her church and community.

Now 75, Story lives in North East, Maryland, with her daughter's family. She decided to move from Arkansas to be closer to grandchildren and enjoys spending time with her family. She has traveled to Gettysburg, Fredericksburg, Charlottesville, Washington, D.C., New York City, and beaches in Delaware and Maryland. She also enjoys crocheting, sewing and knitting.

Email Story at [franny1104@yahoo.com](mailto:franny1104@yahoo.com).

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## Vines Center among Top 3 in Unique Venues Planner's Choice Awards

The C.A. Vines Arkansas 4-H Center has been named a top three finisher in its category in the annual Unique Venues Planner's Choice Awards.

The Vines Center was tied with the Rutgers University Inn & Conference Center in New Brunswick, New Jersey. The top finisher in the small-market venue category was the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield, Illinois. Unique Venues is a marketing organization that connects venues with meeting planners.

The national competition announced its winners Dec. 6.

"It's an honor to be considered for this award," said Tony Baker, operations manager for the Vines Center. "We are truly a unique venue and appreciate the recognition as one of the best in our class."

The Vines Center — located about 18 miles west of downtown Little Rock — has 94 air-conditioned rooms, each with private bath. The center also has a state-of-the-art 474-seat theatre with audio-visual services. The center is also digital-friendly, with fiber optic-based Wi-Fi across the meeting and lodging areas. ■



Crew stands in front of a newly installed sign for the Vines Center.

## Message from the director

The new year is off to an exciting start for the Cooperative Extension Service. My inbox has been flooded with announcements of new employees joining our Extension team and family. Between the effects of the pandemic and several retirements, we had a lot of positions to fill in 2022 and will continue this work into 2023. These include many county positions as well as state office faculty and staff. Sadly, one example of this is that we are losing someone who for the past 7 years has worked very hard to make this publication as well as our Extension retiree program grow and become very successful. Brian Helms is retiring from Extension after more than 26 years of service. We wish Brian the best, and I commit to finding someone to fill his shoes and continue the work he has done with retirees and other stakeholder groups.

January and February are big months in the agriculture counties for county meetings. I plan to drop in on at least five or six of them around the state between now and March. Even in this digital age, I still think it is hard to beat an in-person county meeting where growers and consultants can have face-to-face interactions with specialists and county agents

to discuss the past year and its research. As a former specialist, I can say that January through early March is a long haul of continuous meetings. If you are still involved in agriculture, get out and attend one of these meetings in your respective area.

Another reason to attend spring Extension meetings is to have a chance to meet new faculty. We have hired and are continuing to hire a bunch of new positions, including county agents. For some of them, the county meetings will be their first introduction to some of our clientele, and I wish them all the best. An endorsement or word of encouragement from former agents can go a long way toward supporting a new agent, so I encourage all retirees to get out and meet your new county staff and put them to work!

Like many of you, I am excited for spring. These recent little bursts of warm weather sort of give you a false sense that spring is here. I am sure February and March will have something to say about that. More on spring Extension stuff next month. ■



## Division of Agriculture, Anheuser-Busch team up to research, promote resource conservation

The University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture and Anheuser-Busch are partnering to research and promote resource conservation for rice farming in Arkansas and the surrounding region. Their focus will be on preserving water quality and quantity and nutrient management.

The corporate “Smart Agriculture” goals were stated in Anheuser-Busch’s 2025 sustainability plan, written in 2018, said Bill Jones, rice agronomy manager for Anheuser-Busch.

Jones, who is based at the company’s Jonesboro, Arkansas, facilities, said the beer brewer has been advancing methods to reduce water use in its beer making for years. With their “Smart Agriculture” goals, the company wants to extend those practices to the growers from which they buy rice, mostly in Arkansas.

Rice is a key ingredient in the brewing process. Anheuser-Busch purchased 18.3 million bushels of rice directly from farmers in 2021. “This is 99 percent Arkansas rice,” Jones said.

“Our efforts are 100 percent directed toward developing skills and financial empowerment for our growers,” Jones said. “The long-term success of farms, including those in Arkansas, are vital for Anheuser-Busch’s ability to brew its beers with high-quality ingredients.”

For help convincing growers that these resource conservation practices are worth the effort, Jones reached out to Trent Roberts, associate professor of soil fertility and testing for the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station, and Mike Daniels, professor and crop, soil and environmental sciences associate department head for the Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service.

Roberts is also the Endowed Chair in Soil Fertility Research for the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station, the research arm of the Division of Agriculture. Daniels is the director of the division’s Arkansas Discovery Farms program.

Discovery Farms are privately owned Arkansas farms on which research and demonstration programs are conducted regarding the environmental impacts of agricultural production, Daniels said. Data collected on the farms contributes to experiment station research. Visitors can see first-hand how science-based information, technology and management performs on working farms.

Jones and Roberts had collaborated in the past on nutrient management issues. They had a connection through



their common alma mater, Oklahoma State University. When Jones sought help in extending water conservation information to growers, Roberts put him in touch with Daniels. The Discovery Farms provided an ideal platform for demonstrating practical water conservation methods.

When Anheuser-Busch added nutrient management to its resource conservation efforts, that led Jones back to Roberts.

“This program is funded by the Anheuser-Busch Foundation to advance innovative farming practices and drive sustainability,” Jones said. “The University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture is the most respected Land Grant Institution in rice research, and we are excited about our continued partnership to help support rice producers in Arkansas and beyond.”

“Bill and Anheuser-Busch have been very supportive of N-STaR (Nitrogen Soil Test for Rice) and the Green Seeker tool for nutrient management,” Roberts said. “Forming a partnership with them and using Discovery Farms as a platform allows us to set up large-scale field projects.”

Roberts said the partners are conducting four research projects:

- Cover crops in zero-grade rice fields
- Cover crops in furrow-irrigated rice-soybean rotations
- Enhanced fertilizer treatments
- Nutrient management research on a Discovery Farm adjacent to an Anheuser-Busch facility in Jonesboro

The test fields are contrasted with control plots that use traditional management practices.

These research projects will help sort out the best management practices in these conditions, Roberts said.

In addition to better understanding the resource conservation benefits of alternate management systems, Roberts said the team will learn how those practices affect yield and profitability for Arkansas rice farms.

Read more [here](#). ■

## February Birthdays

Phillip Sims - Feb. 1  
Leo Espinoza - Feb. 1  
Bobby Huey - Feb. 2  
Booker Clemons - Feb. 2  
Charlotte Chitwood - Feb. 2  
Brenda Waldrum - Feb. 2  
Bob Reynolds - Feb. 3  
Larry Sandage - Feb. 3  
Carol Patterson - Feb. 4  
Beverly Henderson-Vincent - Feb. 4  
Edward Rhodes - Feb. 4  
Fran Tomerlin - Feb. 5  
Mark Phillips - Feb. 5  
Sheila Brandt - Feb. 5  
Belinda Miller - Feb. 6  
Dora Dinnan - Feb. 7

Beverly Hines - Feb. 7  
Wanda House - Feb. 8  
Gertrude Henderson - Feb. 9  
Marie Corbin - Feb. 9  
Catherine Koch - Feb. 9  
Allan Beuerman - Feb. 9  
Ella Geisler - Feb. 10  
Jimmie Gooch - Feb. 10  
Joy Buffalo - Feb. 10  
Steve Rodery - Feb. 11  
Ms. Yvonne Zanette McCool - Feb. 11  
Ann Ward - Feb. 12  
Keith Lusby - Feb. 13  
Sharon Lillard - Feb. 15  
Paula Seago - Feb. 18  
Cheryl Williams - Feb. 18

Lynda Lee - Feb. 20  
Delores Sowerbrower - Feb. 21  
George Davis - Feb. 22  
Denise Murdoch - Feb. 22  
Larry Holeman - Feb. 22  
Gerald Van Brunt - Feb. 23  
Rebecca Thomas - Feb. 23  
Doyne Potts - Feb. 24  
Robert Felsman - Feb. 24  
Jeri Vangilder - Feb. 24  
Charles Johnston - Feb. 26  
Clara Garrett - Feb. 26  
James Geisler - Feb. 27  
Larry Keaton - Feb. 27  
Linda Simpson - Feb. 27  
Carole Scaramuzza - Feb. 28

## Scholarship donations

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

### Elizabeth Childs Memorial Endowment

Liz Childs

### CES Retiree Scholarship

Barbara Simmons  
Charlie Parsons

## Retirements

### Scott Stiles

Scott began his career with Cooperative Extension in Nov. of 1999. He retired Dec. 1, 2022 as a instructor-economics in the Department of Agricultural Economics. Scott retired with 23 years of service.

## Eleanor J. Walls Passes

Eleanor Juanita Perry Bristow Walls, 86 of Little Rock passed away Tuesday, Dec. 27, 2022. Eleanor retired from Extension in June of 1997. She was serving as the Extension housing specialist at retirement. Funeral services were held Dec. 30th.

## MAKE A DONATION TO THIS YEAR'S SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS

### Invest in the future of Extension's greatest assets: its employees.

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.

## Sharing Your 2023 Resolutions

### "Do what I can to stay healthy."

Jerry Williams, former County Extension Agent-Staff Chairman

### "Do enough P&T to get shoulder working properly or better."

Eric Grant, former County Extension Agent

### "Survive with dignity and the grace of God."

Shirley Bennett, former Executive Administrative Assistant

*Wishing you good times, good cheer and a memorable new year.*

