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Retiree Spotlight

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**DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION**

University of Arkansas System

Doing What LaVetta Wants To Do

LaVetta Davis Perkins is finally heeding some of the healthy living advice she doled out to folks while working at Extension.

"I've learned to relax and laugh more," she said. "I just enjoy every day to the fullest. Before, I was always too busy preparing for the next class."

A week after she retired in August 2013, Perkins moved to Hot Springs Village, buying a house that can accommodate her son and his family – which includes a granddaughter and a large extended family. They congregate at Perkins' house for birthdays, holidays and reunions.

Perkins is a widow. She married her husband, Norman, a few years before she retired from Extension. He died 40 days after they married, but they had known each other for many years.

"We impacted each other's lives for more than 30 years," she said. "First as family friends, friends, then soul mates. We shared every aspect of friendship."

She said Norman Perkins was a mentor to

her son, who's now a captain in the Air Force. She said her son also benefitted from the 4-H program. The briefings and speeches he gave in 4-H prepared him for speaking as part of his job in the military, and he's won awards for his ability in that area.

Perkins worked with 4-H'ers throughout the time she worked for Extension. She started working for Extension in Texarkana as a county Extension agent - Family and Consumer Sciences/ 4-H agent in July 1982. After nearly a year, she moved to Hempstead County as county Extension agent – Family and Consumer Sciences and staff chair. She remained there for 31 years.

"I was on my third generation of 4-H'ers," she said. "While I was working at Extension, I made lifetime family friends that I'll always have."

Perkins now lives nearly two hours away from the people she worked with for so many years, but she still gets together with them.

But she's also busy in her new community. As



LaVetta Perkins

she did while working for Extension, Perkins has started some exercise classes in the Village. She's part of other groups that play games, meet for potlucks, do water aerobics in the lake on Saturdays in the summer and quilt. She also enjoys playing the piano, cross-stitching, reading and gardening.

About Extension, Perkins said: "It was a great career for me. But after 31½ years, it was time to do something different."

She joked, "Now, I just do what LaVetta wants to do."

To reconnect with LaVetta Davis Perkins, contact her at #1 Galeon Place, Hot Springs Village, Ark. 71909, 870-703-1688.

– Shannon Magsam

Dorothy Hall Has a Long To-Do List

Earlier this month, Dorothy Hall helped pull off a successful SEC Women's Basketball Tournament in Little Rock.

She's a self-professed basketball junkie and was in charge of coordinating all the volunteers for the tournament. It was a big job, but Hall, whose daughter played basketball in high school and college, ran state-wide basketball tournaments for many years and she was up to the challenge.

She's a pro at getting things done. Hall had only been graduated from the University of Central Arkansas for a week in 1970 when she went to work as an assistant home demonstration agent in Lonoke County. After a few months, she went to Fordyce as an Extension home economist for five years.

Next up, she moved to Sheridan for five years, and that was when she earned a master's degree. It's also where she built a house – yes, an actual house – as the basis for her thesis. She and her husband still live in that house today, although additions and renovations have changed up the look a bit.

Her next Extension post was in Texarkana, where she was a home economics leader. She

then took a position at the State Office: district program leader for Northeast Arkansas. While at the State Office, she also served a stint as district director for Southwest Arkansas and then associate director for county operations.

"Cooperative Extension has lots of opportunities for advancement and personal growth," she said.

When she retired from Extension in July of 2000, Hall's title was associate director, management and operations. While at the state level, Hall created a comprehensive human resources department for Extension offices across Arkansas. She also helped create Extension's first online employee policy manual – and the first print-on-demand system.

Hall is innovative and high-energy. After retirement, she didn't slow down.

"I didn't retire, actually, I just transitioned," she clarified.

Hall's father passed away a few years after she left Extension (her first few years were spent taking care of him and her mother-in-law, who also passed away around that time), and she decided to revitalize his old farm in Cleveland County.

Hall's father was the first farmer in the county to sprig hybrid Bermuda-grass, and she got it going again. She raked, cut, loaded and sold the hay with the help of her son, Jeffery, and her husband, Randy. They now also have about 120 head of cattle in Roland, where Jeffery lives.

Hall also has quite a few real estate investments and manages eight of the properties. She also renovates houses and has flipped about five houses since retiring. She does most of the construction/renovation herself – or with the help of her husband, son and daughter.

"I'm pretty handy with a crowbar," she joked. "My dad was a carpenter before he was a farmer."

And she loves to travel. She's visited Italy, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Germany, Switzerland, France, England and Scotland. She and her daughter, Gretchen, just returned from Dubai. Gretchen is the CEO of the Little Rock Convention and Visitors Bureau.

In 2012, Hall ran for a position as state representative in the newly redistricted area where her farm is located. They knocked on about 5,000 doors. She hasn't ruled out running for office again.



Dorothy Hall

Hall, who has worked behind the scenes for senatorial and presidential campaigns, has always been politically inclined. She and a friend started a group last year called Arkansas Women Vote. The focus is on changing the dialogue for the political process in the state, with an emphasis on issues related to women and families.

How does Hall do it all?

"Good planning and scheduling," she said, "plus a very detailed to-do list every day. I like projects with beginning and ending dates so I can move on to something new."

Her downtime includes machine embroidery and spending time with her grandchildren, Gwinn, 9, and Rece, 6.

To reconnect with Dorothy Hall, contact her at 617 Grant 167084, Sheridan, Ark. 72150-6411, (870) 942-5902.

– Shannon Magsam

From the Editorial Board

Jessica Vincent, Galaxy Conference chair, has provided the information at right concerning this year's Galaxy Conference. Shannon Caldwell, 4-H Center Program Director, is in charge of registration and is your contact person if you have any further questions.

This year's retiree luncheon will be April 1 at 11:30 a.m. We hope to see you there. The luncheon meal is free of charge for you and your spouse, courtesy of Dr. Tony Windham. Please note that retirees are invited to attend all or any part of the conference, but only the luncheon meal is free of charge.

We hope you'll consider attending the retiree luncheon and the entire Galaxy Conference.

Editorial Board Members

Mike Wright	Lorraine Hupp
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April Birthdays

Annette Coor, April 1	John Payne, April 11
Linda King, April 1	Melvin Daniel, April 12
Yvonne Mizell, April 1	Rich Maples, April 12
Kenneth Williams, April 2	Charlotte Fant, April 15
Woody Miley, April 3	Mary Ruth Miner Fallin, April 17
Nancy Winterbauer Olofson, April 3	Brenda Henderson Pratt, April 18
Susan Sanders, April 4	Rebecca Reynolds, April 19
Easter Tucker, April 5	Mary Butler, April 21
Janice Wadkins, April 5	Phil Tacker, April 22
Kathryn Lynch, April 6	Tommie Wyatt, April 22
Bonnie Wright, April 7	Claude Bonner, April 25
Ann Gray, April 8	Eleanor Walls, April 27
Colleen Owen, April 8	Dianne Jones, April 29
Stanley Chapman, April 9	
Louise Walker, April 10	



It's that time of year. Time to register for the 2015 Galaxy Conference!

When: March 31-April 2, 2015

Where: Winthrop Rockefeller Institute - Petit Jean

Cost: Full-time registration is only \$125 (goes up \$25 after March 10, 2015). One-day and two-day registrations are available. See registration for cost.

Included in Registration: Conference sessions and meals during the conference. You must make your own room reservations.*

How do I register for the conference?

Go to <https://regonline.com/2015galaxy>

Is there a culinary class available this year?

Yes, To register for the culinary class: **Putting FUN Back in FOOD w/ Chef Hall** (April 1, 1:00-1:50 p.m.). Go to <https://regonline.com/2015galaxyculinary>. Personal funds must be used to pay for this class. This registration is separate from conference registration.

I'm a retiree. What do I do to register for the Retiree Luncheon?

Go to <https://regonline.com/2015galaxy> and select the retiree luncheon registration type. Retirees who attend the Retiree Luncheon ONLY will not be charged a fee. Attending any other part of the conference does come with a fee.

I'm a retiree and would like to attend more than just the retiree luncheon. I want to attend the conference. Do I need to do something different? Is there a fee for me?

Yes. If you are a retiree and would like to attend more than just the retiree luncheon, you will need to select the conference registration that fits the time frame you plan to attend (Full Registration, one-day registration, or two-day registration). You will need to pay the fee associated with the registration you select.

Where can I get a conference schedule and session descriptions?

See [Schedule and session descriptions](https://regonline.com/2015galaxy) on registration web site: <https://regonline.com/2015galaxy>

I need help with my registration. Who can I contact?

Shannon L. Caldwell, scaldwell@uaex.edu or 501-786-1692 (cell)

***Room Reservation Information:**

You need to make your own room reservations for the 2015 Galaxy Conference. Contact the Winthrop Rockefeller Institute Conference Center (www.rockefellerinstitute.org) by calling directly at 501-727-5435 (Toll Free: 866-972-7778) Fax: 501-727-5242. Make sure you tell them your reservation is for the 2015 Galaxy Conference to get the Conference lodging rate.

Contact for Registration Help: Shannon L. Caldwell, 4-H Center Program Director, 1 Four-H Way, Little Rock, AR 72223, (501) 821-6884 (office), (501) 786-1692 (cell).



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Yes, I will subscribe to the *Extension Cord*.

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Yes, I want to support the *Advance 25K: Continuing a Legacy* fundraising initiative in support of the Cooperative Extension Service Retiree Scholarship.

Enclosed is my gift of \$20.12 Other \$_____

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