



Keeping you connected

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U of A
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University of Arkansas System

No. 3

Rosemary Rodibaugh: A passion for people

Rosemary Rodibaugh's introduction to the Cooperative Extension Service occurred during her time as a PhD student at Purdue in 1989. She had an assistantship that allowed her to work with the food and nutrition hotline.

"The hotline was exclusively for county extension agents that specialized in family and consumer sciences," Rodibaugh said. "I thought it was the coolest thing, and I decided that was what I wanted to do. My professor was also the extension nutrition specialist at Purdue."

After she finished her degree, Rodibaugh began searching for jobs in the career field that she so deeply loved.

"I applied for several jobs in different places and interviewed, but Arkansas was the first one to offer me a job," Rodibaugh said. "Dr. Pam Brady was my mentor during that time, and she taught me so much about being an extension specialist. I am very grateful for that."



Rosemary Rodibaugh (left) eating dinner with her sister, Susan Corvari (right).

Her career with extension started in the early 90s, and she was passionate about teaching people how to make informed decisions throughout her entire career.

"I developed grocery store tours to teach people to make healthy choices. We partnered with the Department of Health to do a maternal nutrition project," Rodibaugh said. "Our agents received training to work with pregnant women to make healthy choices."

Rodibaugh is grateful for her time with extension and the career she had.

"I really loved working with the agents and going out to their counties to help them with their programs," Rodibaugh said. "Arkansas has a wonderful staff that want to help people in their communities."

After nearly 29 years, Rodibaugh decided to retire in February of 2018. She has spent the last three years traveling with her sister.

"The first summer after I retired, my sister and I went on a Rhine river cruise with the Master Gardeners," Rodibaugh said. "We spent nine days traveling, and we went through Amsterdam and Switzerland."

She has other siblings that she gets to visit with her free time, and that requires a little bit of travel too.

"I have a brother that is also retired, and he has lived in New York and South Carolina," Rodibaugh said. "I've visited him in both places. My sister lives in Indianapolis, so I have gotten to see her multiple times."

Rodibaugh grew up in Indiana and lived there into her adulthood years, but she had never had an experience that most Hoosiers consider essential.

"My brother had an extra ticket for the Indy 500, so that was an interesting experience," Rodibaugh said.

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Rodibaugh, cont.

She has used her retirement to refine her green thumb by working on her yard.

"April through November is the time of year that I really get to take care of my yard by mowing and trimming," Rodibaugh said. "It takes up a good amount of my time in the warm months."

Her list of projects is long and continuous, and Rodibaugh says she plans on tackling some more of those in the future.

"Most of my goals include travel, since it's what I love to do," Rodibaugh said. "There are six or seven states I haven't been to yet and a couple of national parks that I want to visit. I'm just waiting on my sister to retire so she can go with me."

Having a career in extension allowed her to see a lot of places that she says she might not have been able to see otherwise.

"I was able to travel with extension, which was wonderful. It allowed me to check many states off of my 'been there' list," Rodibaugh said.

COVID-19 altered plans for millions of people around the globe, and Rodibaugh was no different. The pandemic led to the cancellation of her 50th year class reunion, but she is not letting that stop her from revisiting her hometown.

"I plan to go back and visit the area where I grew up, because I haven't been back there in nearly 25 years," Rodibaugh said. "I was really looking forward to the reunion."

Luckily, the event was rescheduled for this summer, and she is hopeful that it will go off without a hitch.

Her love of helping people was the reason she started working for extension in the first place.

"That idea of having information that I could share with people that would hopefully make their lives better was something that drew me to extension," Rodibaugh said. "It made the deal even sweeter that I was surrounded by other people and county agents that felt the same way." ©

Deep freeze inflicts widespread damage to fruit crops, leads growers to consider options

After the February storms that locked Arkansas in record snowfall and sub-zero temperatures, Kenny Drewry is considering a few changes on his farm.

Drewry and his family operate Drewry Farm and Orchards in Dover. It's a highly diversified operation that includes peaches, apples, melons, pumpkins and hay that's open to agritourism visitors.

He has hundreds of peach trees of various varieties, each covered with buds. Those buds are key to the delicious fruit that people drive for miles to buy.

"It's very difficult to tell how many are alive," Drewry said. "Those temps went to below where it would take to kill them."

In his initial survey in parts of the peach orchard, "we could find a peach bud every now and then. If I found a limb that might have 100 buds on it, you might find one or two alive."

He said he would be surveying his crops every two weeks to get a better feel for what survived and what didn't.

A regular part of peach production is thinning to ensure some fruit can get the full benefit of the tree's nutrients and grow to their full potential. Sometimes this is done through pruning in late winter or by reducing the fruit load in spring.

"You only need about 5 percent to make a crop," Drewry said. After the freeze left him with only 1 or 2 percent buds at best, he joked that, "really, I'd rather do my own thinning."

Expecting a reduction in peach yield, he said he's looking at other options to compensate.

"We plant watermelons and other produce every year. We'll plant more of those," Drewry said. Another route is increasing the number of apple trees. Apples bloom later than peaches, which is a huge advantage to dodging freeze damage.

"You have a freeze that will take your peaches out and your apples will be so dormant that they will make it OK," Drewry said, adding that his expanding apple orchard would include Arkansas Black apples, Fuji Supreme and DeRosa apples.

"You will have a crop of apples when you don't have peaches," he said.

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ASSESSING THE DAMAGE -- Kenny Drewry of Drewry Farm and Orchard in Dover, Arkansas, examines his fruit trees for damage caused by the record cold and snowfall in February.

Deep freeze, cont.

Waiting and watching

However, damage assessment isn't simply a one-and-done exercise. It will require monitoring for weeks to come, said Amanda McWhirt, extension specialist-horticulture crops for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture. For tips on assessing fruit crops, visit <http://bit.ly/2O7rq9K>.

McWhirt said that while many crops were still dormant when the low temperatures came, some buds were beginning to swell on some blueberries, peaches and blackberries. McWhirt, along with agents in Benton, Sebastian, Crawford, Green, Franklin and White counties along with personnel at the Southwest Research and Extension Center in Hope, conducted a wide-ranging survey of cold damage to fruit crops.

Peach damage in the survey found bud damage ranged from zero to 100 percent, depending on location.

"Some later cultivars did not show damage at locations where temperatures only got to just below zero degrees Fahrenheit," McWhirt said. "Other locations where the lows reached minus 20 degrees had close to 100 percent damage to buds that were examined."

To read more go to <https://www.uaex.uada.edu/media-resources/news/2021/february2021/02-26-2021-Ark-fruit-freeze.aspx>.

To our Extension retirees

I can now add major snowstorm to the list of adventures we have had during my first year as director of the Cooperative Extension Service. Hopefully all of you survived with limited damage. A couple of our county offices flooded due to burst pipes and a few other minor issues, but for the most part we are still intact. There is a lot of excitement amongst Extension personnel these days over the reduction in COVID-19 numbers and related issues over the past couple of months. Vaccinations seem to be kicking in, and we have once again lowered our restrictions on in-person meetings back to where they were "pre-surge," allowing groups of 10 to 100 with only my approval and a plan for social distancing. This has created a flurry of meetings being scheduled in all the main areas of Extension. This is especially true in 4-H, Master Gardeners, and Extension Homemakers, and I am very pleased at how eager these groups are to get back to business as new usual. I am knocking on wood as I write this for those of you who are superstitious.

As we look to a time when we meet with no restrictions, we continue to develop great online content. I want to encourage all of you to check out the "Gardening from the Ground Up" web series

Many thanks Keith Perkins!

We are very proud of our own Keith Perkins and his selfless support of fellow Arkansans through his plasma donations for COVID patients! He also serves his local community as staff chair for the Lonoke County Extension office. Keith Perkins will soon be making his 20th plasma donation. Outstanding service, Keith!

Keith was featured in the Arkansas Democrat Gazette. You can read the article here: <https://www.arkansasonline.com/news/2021/jan/31/covid-survivors-plasma-donations-are-a-life-saver/>.



Keith Perkins, Staff Chair - Lonoke County

produced by Brad Runsick (Baxter County), Cody Stroud (Sharp County), and Cory Tyler (Fulton County). I know I am ready to get out and work in the yard a while – my form of therapy. I have said it many times, but we have some very innovative and creative folks out in our counties. Many of the programs we developed specifically in response to the pandemic will probably continue long after it comes to an end.

Finally, I want to thank all of you who have continued to support the Extension Service Retiree Scholarship Fund. This is a great way to ensure the success of our faculty and staff by providing opportunities for professional development. As always, we love hearing from our retirees with advice or observations that might be helpful. You can start with me at my new email — bscott@uada.edu!



April Birthdays

Annette Coor - April 1
Saundra Blocker - April 1
Kenneth Williams - April 2
Nancy Winterbauer Olofson - April 3
Susan Sanders - April 4
Janice Wadkins - April 5

Easter Tucker - April 5
Ione Daniel - April 6
Bonnie Wright - April 7
Ann Gray - April 8
Stan Chapman - April 9
Louise Walker - April 10

John Payne - April 11
Melvin Daniel - April 12
Rich Maples - April 12
Mary Ruth Miner Fallin - April 17
Becky Reynolds - April 19
Janet Carson - April 19

Tommie Wyatt - April 22
Phil Tacker - April 22,
Claude Bonner - April 25
Eleanor Walls - April 27
Diane Jones - April 29

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

James Aikman

In memory of Larry Pitman

Dorothy Hall

In memory of Earlton Sanders

In memory of Mary Shaver

Andy Vangilder

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.

Our domain is changing

In an effort to further consolidate our identity as a single Division of Agriculture, we will be changing our domain name to UADA.edu. This will be a significant change affecting not only our websites, but also our emails, logins and any collateral that contains our web address.

When will this happen?

In April, unless an extension is granted by Educause, the governing body that manages .edu domains.

This means our websites will become:

- **UADA.edu** – for the main Division of Agriculture site.
- **UAEX.UADA.edu** — for the Cooperative Extension Service.
- **AAES.UADA.edu** — for the Agricultural Experiment Station, a change that will take place later.



Welcome new retirees!

Debie Head, Family & Consumer Sciences, LRSO

Debie began her Extension career in January 2017 and retired on February 28, 2021. Debie was the Associate Department Head for FCS and retired with 4 years of service.

Beth Phelps, Ouachita District

Beth began her career in January 1993 in Pulaski County and retired February 26, 2021. Beth was the Ouachita District Director and retired with 28 years of service.

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

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Yes, I want to support the fundraising initiative in support of the Cooperative Extension Service Retiree Scholarship.

Enclosed is my gift of \$_____. My gift is in honor / in memory of _____.

Name/Address for notification of honorary and memorial gifts:

Please make check payable to the **UA Foundation** and mail to Brian Helms, Development Office, 2301 South University Avenue, Little Rock AR 72204-4940.

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