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Stone County native Anderson to take Cooperative Extension Service reins in 2024

An agricultural economist raised in the tiny Stone County community of Timbo is set to become the next director of the Cooperative Extension Service.

John Anderson will assume his new role as senior associate vice president-extension for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture on Jan. 2, said Deacue Fields, vice president-agriculture for the University of Arkansas System.

As director, Anderson will oversee the extension service land-grant outreach mission across all 75 counties.

“With his broad experience, outstanding record of innovation and achievements and just plain enthusiasm for the outreach mission, John is set to strengthen the work the Cooperative Extension Service is doing to improve lives in Arkansas,” said Fields. “John’s background in agriculture, economics and policy will be of great use as leader of the extension service.”

Anderson has been head of the agricultural economics and agribusiness department since January 2020, with appointments in both the Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences and the Division of Agriculture. He is also head of the Fryar Price Risk Management Center of Excellence. Before that, he worked for the American Farm Bureau in Washington and is a veteran of the U.S. Army Reserve.

For more than 20 years, Anderson has worked as an agricultural economist in both academic and industry positions. His work has involved describing and assessing the farm- and agricultural sector-level impacts of policy, regulatory and market developments across a wide variety of agricultural commodities and markets. Anderson has

served as a faculty member, with primary appointments in extension, at the University of Kentucky and Mississippi State University.

Anderson has a Bachelor of Science in agribusiness from College of the Ozarks, a Master of Science in agriculture from Arkansas State University and a Ph.D. in agricultural economics from Oklahoma State University.

He also went back to school to earn a master’s in Christian leadership from the Dallas Theological Seminary in 2020.

Earlier this year, Anderson was selected to become the next president of the Southern Agricultural Economics Association, a role in which he will continue.

Raised on a family farm with beef cattle, broilers and a custom hay harvest operation, Anderson grew up with extension.

His family “had a fertilizer business and we were constantly running soil tests to the county office,” Anderson said. “My first exposure to extension was on the agriculture side.”

Far from being outdated, “extension is as important as it's ever been,” he said. “If you look at what's going on in our rural communities right now, if you look at what's going on in the world, there’s a desperate need for unbiased, reliable information to help people make decisions across all aspects of their lives. That’s what extension does.”

Read more [here](#). ■



THE INSIDE STORIES

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Roofe named head of Family and Consumer Sciences for extension

Helping people live better has been at the heart of Nina Roofe's career – as a longtime registered dietitian, as a professor and chair of the Department of Nutrition and Family Sciences at the University of Central Arkansas, and now in her new leadership role as assistant vice president of Family and Consumer Sciences for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture.

Roofe started Sept. 25 and will ensure research-based programming is available to meet the needs of Arkansans in the areas of food and nutrition, food safety and preservation, health and exercise, personal finance, home safety, early childhood and mental health.

"Family and Consumer Sciences has always appealed to me because it takes a holistic approach — meeting people where they are, where they live, where they work. It's practical. It's all about helping people and helping them improve their lives," she said.

"You can design a nutritiously balanced plate of food and teach someone how to cook, but if they can't afford to buy the food or if they live somewhere without a kitchen, it doesn't work. You can't just do health and wellness, or nutrition, or home safety, or consumer economics," she said. "It's all intertwined with family life, so you have to look at the whole picture."

The Division of Agriculture's Cooperative Extension Service employs Family and Consumer Science agents in every county of the state. Roofe plans to visit agents in the coming months to assess needs that exist throughout the state and ensure that extension is offering the best programs to meet those needs with resources available.

"Dr. Roofe has more than 32 years of experience and brings a wealth of knowledge to the position," said Bob Scott, senior associate vice president for agriculture-extension and director of the Cooperative Extension Service. "I am excited for her to join our team."

Family and Consumer Sciences is one of four extension units. Other units include Agriculture and Natural



Resources, 4-H, and Community Professional and Economic Development. Roofe's position is a newly restructured one. Before Roofe's hire, one person oversaw both Family and Consumer Sciences and Arkansas 4-H.

"It needed to be two positions because they are two separate units," Scott said.

Working for extension has been on Roofe's "career bucket list."

She grew up in Izard County on a beef cattle farm and was involved in 4-H, the youth leadership program of the Division of Agriculture. Her great aunt was a home economist in Izard County, and her great uncle ran the Soil Conservation Service. Her husband's stepfather was also an extension agent.

"I feel like I've always had the extension gene," she said.

Before joining the Division of Agriculture, Roofe was a professor and chair of the Department of Nutrition and Family Sciences in the College of Health & Behavioral Sciences at UCA, where she has taught since 2002.

"I love teaching," Roofe said. "I swore I'd never be a teacher because my parents were both public school teachers, and I saw their struggles, but I love it. You're reaching students, and they touch lives. It's a ripple effect."

Roofe has a Bachelor of Science in Dietetics from the University of Central Arkansas; a Master of Science in Corporate Health Promotion from the University of Arkansas; and Ph.D in Family and Consumer Sciences Education from Iowa State University. ■

End of an era for Brady club marks new beginnings

The Brady Extension Homemakers Club made the best of a bittersweet situation. With just six members remaining in their century-old volunteer group, it was time to disband — but not without two more acts of service.

They sold their property and building to a Little Rock congregation whose church was destroyed in a tornado. Then they donated \$281,800 to Arkansas 4-H to endow a scholarship for youth.

The six women are members of the Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council, one of the state's largest volunteer organizations with 3,200 members in 329 clubs throughout the state.

“We have just six remaining members, and we didn’t have the wherewithal to continue with maintenance and upkeep,” Brady EHC trustee Barbara Penney said. “We decided to sell our property and give the proceeds to a nonprofit. It was a hard and tearful decision, but we’re proud to say that we honor those who came before us by creating an endowment for the Arkansas 4-H Foundation.”

The Apostolic Sanctuary of Little Rock purchased the 1,800-square-foot building at 201 S. Rodney Parham Road in Little Rock.

“The church has completed lots of renovations and has already held their first worship service in their new building,” Penney said.

“It’s not every day we get an endowment, and certainly not one this size,” said John Thomas, managing director of the Arkansas 4-H Foundation. “This will fund college scholarships, trips to National 4-H Congress for youth and provide some funds to help out 4-H state officers do their work.”

Laura Hendrix, associate professor for personal finance and the state advisor to the Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council, said the Brady EHC Club could not have found a more fitting recipient than Arkansas 4-H. Both Extension Homemakers and Arkansas 4-H are programs of the Cooperative Extension Service, part of the Division of Agriculture. Both groups also have similar missions of helping members learn, lead and serve.

“The relationship between 4-H and EHC has always been a close one,” Hendrix said. “I’m so proud of you for thinking of 4-Hers, who are really the future of family and consumer sciences,” she told the club.



Members of the Brady EHC Club present a check Sept. 25, 2023, to Arkansas 4-H Foundation to create an endowed scholarship. From left: Dr. Bob Scott, Cooperative Extension Service director; John Thomas, Arkansas 4-H Foundation managing director; Debbie Nistler, head of 4-H and Youth Development; Laura Hendrix, Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council state advisor; Brady EHC member Barbara Penney, Arkansas 4-H State Officer Kacie Clark, Arkansas 4-H Foundation Vice President Darlene Millard, Brady EHC members Elizabeth Childs, Dianna Noe, Ellen McCloskey, Marianne Langston, and Brenda Forthman.

The Brady EHC Club started in 1914, when a group of Little Rock homemakers formed a home demonstration club.

“We have a great history,” Penney said of the club. “They went out in horse-drawn carriages to teach skills to other homemakers in rural areas.”

Home demonstration clubs, like Brady’s, were an important part of the Cooperative Extension Service, which started in the early 20th century as an experiment in adult education. The home demonstrations taught farm women improved methods for accomplishing their household responsibilities and encouraged them to better their families’ living conditions through home improvements and labor-saving devices.

Home demonstration clubs evolved into today’s Extension Homemakers Clubs whose mission is to provide continuing education and leadership skills, as well as foster community service.

Brady EHC members sold sandwiches, cookies and cakes through the years and saved money until they could buy land at Rodney Parham Road and Markham Street in Little Rock. In 1970, they sold some of their land and used the money to build a clubhouse.

“It’s bittersweet for me,” member Ellen McCloskey said. “I went to first grade in the Brady building when it was still a frame building with black tar paper for insulation.” ■

December Birthdays

Becky O'Neal Mulhollen - Dec. 1	Shirley Lewis - Dec. 11	Cindy Gayle Golden - Dec. 19	Mitch Crow - Dec. 26
Dena Malone - Dec. 2	Jerry Foley - Dec. 11	Maureen L. Rose - Dec. 21	Liz McKay - Dec. 26
Paul Martin - Dec. 3	Ann D. Behnke - Dec. 12	Suzanne Smith Hirrel - Dec. 21	Sandra H. Smith - Dec. 27
Holly Berry - Dec. 4	Millie Ann Henson - Dec. 13	Gayla Ann Brewer Taylor - Dec. 22	Judy A. Bloesch - Dec. 27
Linda C. Thompson - Dec. 6	Jerry D. Markham - Dec. 14	Audrey Hairston - Dec. 24	Jeff B. Welch - Dec. 28
Barbara Bennett King - Dec. 8	Dick Kluender - Dec. 14	Avonne Petty - Dec. 24	Denise Guydon Roulhac - Dec. 28
Toy Helen Ginn Siler - Dec. 8	Donna Lucas Graham - Dec. 14	Cheryl Maxwell - Dec. 24	Betty Jean Brannan - Dec. 29
Albert W. Squires - Dec. 9	Wayne Miller - Dec. 15	Merle R. Gross - Dec. 24	Tom E. Leslie - Dec. 29
Richard DeSpain - Dec. 9	Brenda J. Yusko - Dec. 18	Bobby Coats Jr. - Dec. 24	Judy Robison - Dec. 29
Susan Watkins - Dec. 9	Beverly Sims - Dec. 18	Dennis R. Gardisser - Dec. 24	Saundria Gaye Ash - Dec. 29
Darlene Horne - Dec. 10	Mary G. Askew - Dec. 19	Blair Steven Griffin - Dec. 24	Anna Landrum - Dec. 31
Joyce Pugh Bowlin - Dec. 10	Mark Peterson - Dec. 19	Margaret Goodson - Dec. 26	

Message from the director



First, I want to wish all of you Happy Holidays from the Cooperative Extension Service and thank you for your service to our organization this year. It has truly been my pleasure to serve for the past three and a half years as extension director. I spent

the first 16 years of my career working for extension as a weed scientist, followed by two years working for the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station at Stuttgart. However, only in the past three years have I truly come to understand the scope and impact that our extension programs collectively deliver to the citizens of Arkansas.

In addition, I am very proud of the many accomplishments we have made over the past three years. Some of these include hiring separate assistant vice presidents for Family and Consumer Sciences and 4-H; adding three county agent instructor positions,

and providing our instructors with their first promotion process. I am also proud of the way extension has emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic stronger than ever, and with many new program delivery methods developed and put in place.

During my time as director, I've spent a lot of time working with Dr. John Anderson in his current role as head of the Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness department. I have the utmost faith and trust in his abilities as he moves into his new role as extension director. I hope you will join me in welcoming him to our extension family. As for me, I will be returning to my roots and rejoining the Crop Soil and Environmental Science department as an extension weed specialist. I look forward to the opportunity to resume my career in my chosen field. Finally, I would like to thank everyone who supported me as director during my time in office. ■



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THIS YEAR'S DINNER AT THE VINES RAISED
\$60,000 to benefit 4-H YOUTH
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