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University of Arkansas System

Agricultural Research and Extension Center marks centennial with renaming dedication

For 100 years, the Arkansas Agricultural Research and Extension Center has helped farmers meet the ever-evolving challenges of agriculture. The center's centennial was celebrated Friday, Oct. 11, by renaming it in honor of the late Milo J. Shult, a longtime vice president for agriculture for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture. During his time in Arkansas, Shult firmly established the division as a leading voice for Arkansas agriculture.

"Milo Shult was a remarkable man with an incredible vision for research and extension," said Donald R. Bobbitt, president of the University of Arkansas System. "He led the effort to develop and improve the division's infrastructure throughout the state. The Research and Extension Center here in Fayetteville underwent a major transformation during Milo's tenure. Renaming this center the Milo J. Shult Agricultural Research and Extension Center is a fitting tribute to Milo's exemplary and impactful career."

Gov. Asa Hutchinson also cited Shult's legacy in a written statement prepared for the dedication.

"Under his leadership, the division became established as the premier agricultural science location in Arkansas," Hutchinson said. "During this time, the value of Arkansas agricultural products also doubled, which is a testament to the incredible impact Dr. Shult's administration had on the state's economy."

Shult began his career at Texas A&M University as a wildlife specialist in Uvalde, Texas, and later served as associate director of the Texas A&M University Agricultural Extension Service in College Station. In 1992, he moved to Arkansas where he served more than 18 years as the vice president for agriculture for the University of Arkansas System, the longest term ever served in that role. He retired in 2011 and died in July this year at age 75.

"Dad did know that this was going to happen," Shult's son,



The Shult family — Jared, Danna, M.J. and Ann Shult — with Drs. Jean-François Meullenet, left, Mark Cochran and Deacue Fields at the sign designating the research farm's new name.

MJ Shult, said of the renaming and dedication. "I could hear the excitement in his voice, and I know he was honored to have his work over those many years recognized."

Shult remained devoted to the land grant system throughout his career. He coined the motto "Arkansas is our campus" to emphasize the division's dedication to improving the state's agriculture and quality of life and the presence of research and extension facilities in all 75 counties. The phrase is still used across the organization, which he helped grow. During his tenure, Shult guided the construction of 18 new facilities and renovation of seven others within the Division of Agriculture.

"He touched so many lives and so many programs," said Mark Cochran, vice president for agriculture for the University of Arkansas System. "He knew we couldn't attract world-class faculty without world-class facilities."

Shult served on many state, regional and national committees. Among these, he served as chair of the USDA National

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Agricultural Research, Extension, Education and Economics Advisory Board, through which he advised the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Congress, and land-grant colleges and universities on top national priorities and policies for food and agricultural research, education, extension and economics. He was inducted into the Arkansas Agriculture Hall of Fame in 2011.

The Milo J. Shult Agricultural Research and Extension Center is one of four research and extension centers located around the state that are operated by the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture. It is the main research complex for the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station, the division's research arm.


The center also provides educational and research facilities and resources for the University of Arkansas' Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences. The Washington County Extension Office and the Arkansas Archeological Survey are both located at the center.

"For a century, this place has been known as a center for innovation in agriculture and food research," said Jean-François

Meullenet, senior associate vice president for agriculture-research and director of the experiment station. "From its very beginnings in 1888, the mission of the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station has been to conduct research and achieve scientific discoveries that benefit Arkansas farmers."

The center got its start in 1919 when 423 acres were purchased for agricultural research and education. The same land has continuously served the needs of agriculture in Arkansas and now includes 725 acres, centrally located near the University of Arkansas.

Meullenet said the center is needed now more than ever.

"As you know we are facing unprecedented challenges in agriculture to feed a rapidly expanding world population," he said. "We have to do this in the next 20 to 30 years with ever-increasing production costs, a changing climate and with decreasing natural resources such as land and water. To meet these challenges, innovation in agriculture needs to be more intense than ever before in our history." 

Cooperative Extension Service celebrates 50 years of food and nutrition education

Family and consumer science agents, program associates and other public education professionals celebrated the 50th anniversary of one of the most successful nutritional outreach programs last month, as the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program, or EFNEP, turned 50.

EFNEP began as a pilot program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Alabama in 1968, aimed at helping families who relied on food stamps — now commonly known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP — make the most of their benefits, said Keith Statham-Cleek, a family and consumer science program associate for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture.

"The program came about because we realized, after issuing food stamps, that our participants were running out of food each month," Statham-Cleek said. "EFNEP helps people stretch their dollar by teaching them how to preserve food safely, increase physical activity and about general nutrition."

In Arkansas, the Cooperative Extension Service operates EFNEP programs in 17 of the state's 75 counties, most of which are in the Delta region, Statham-Cleek said.

On Sept. 5, about 100 program associates from around the state attended a 50th anniversary celebration at the Cooperative Extension headquarters in Little Rock. Susan Forte, executive director of Houseaboutit, a non-profit community and economic development agency, spoke to attendees in her keynote address.


"I know you go about your work very intentionally," Forte said. "There's a barrier to break through, in order to teach people how to eat right."

In the afternoon, Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson presented a congratulatory letter from his office to Dr. Mark Cochran, Vice President for Agriculture for the University of Arkansas System, in recognition of the EFNEP program and the tens of thousands of Arkansans it has served over the decades.



Scenes from the celebration of the 50th anniversary of EFNEP

Doze Butler, dean and director for the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff School of Agriculture, Fisheries and Human Sciences, was also among several speakers throughout the day's events to address attendees. As she concluded her remarks, Butler quoted a Chinese proverb, emphasizing the importance of investing in the well-being of Arkansans.

"If you want one year of prosperity, grow grain," she said. "If you want 10 years of prosperity, grow trees. If you want 100 years of prosperity, grow people." 

4-H young growers deliver supersized fair entries

Arkansas 4-H members showed up Saturday, October 12 at the Arkansas State Fair ready to collect prizes for the fruits of their labors - specifically their pumpkins and watermelons.


Ten-year-old Buster Passmore from Green County won the giant pumpkin contest by a landslide, delivering a 491.5-pound Atlantic Giant pumpkin. Buster and his dad, Mark, used a tractor and a system of straps to load the pumpkin onto a pallet and into their pick-up truck. Once at the fair, a forklift was used to unload it, and six men hoisted the pumpkin off the pallet.

The pumpkin then presented a new problem for judges whose scale maxed out at 400 lbs.

Clay Wingfield, program technician at the Southwest Research and Extension Center in Hope, chairs the annual Giant Pumpkin and Watermelon Contest and said he could not recall a pumpkin bigger than Buster's in recent years.

"It's the biggest one I've ever grown," said Buster, who has a Facebook page "Buster's Garden" with more than 3,700 followers. Asked for his secret to growing big pumpkins, Buster had this to say: "I do have a green thumb. And the other secret ... well, it's a secret."

Colby Daniell, a Clark County 4-H member, won the giant watermelon contest for the third time with a 145-pound melon. This year's watermelon weights ranged from 25 to 145 pounds.

The competitions were open to the top five winners in each county in the state, and the pumpkins and watermelons had to be grown by kids aged nine to 19 years old. The winning entries will remain on exhibit in the Arts & Crafts Building for the duration of the 2019 Arkansas State Fair. 



Colby Daniell, winner of the giant watermelon contest.



Buster Passmore, winner of the giant pumpkin contest, and his 491.5 lb. Atlantic Giant.

To Our Extension Retirees

October has arrived and we have had the first frost, at least in the northern part of the state. I really don't like cold weather, but have found that gives me something to gripe about, which seems increasingly important as I move through life. So, here's to griping about the weather.



It truly was a sad day to learn of the passing forward of Howard Young. I counseled with Howard a number of times as faculty, as Associate Director, and as Director and he defined clear thinking. I first knew him through my father-in-law in the 1980s or before, as they were good friends and once in a while he shared his wisdom with me. At the services, I was fortunate to once again talk to Inez, and even that day she made me feel better, a rather remarkable talent. As always when around these two, I felt inadequate. Howard and Inez were truly unique in my experience.

As well as Howard was known in the north half of the state, and statewide in cattle industry leadership, Gladys Lindsey was known in the southern part, with many years of service as county extension agent. While I did not know her personally, I have certainly heard about her legacy, which lives on in many people changed by her efforts. Don't we all wish for a positive living legacy to succeed us?

Last week, I attended the Centennial recognition of the Arkansas Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Fayetteville, perhaps better known as the UA Farm. Many of us have memories of the "farm", working there as students and what not, or some of us professionally in time. It is a rather interesting place and now also houses the headquarters of the Agricultural Experiment Station in the Don Tyson Building. Anyway, the celebration featured the renaming of the "farm" as the Milo J. Shult Research and Extension Center, in recognition of the late Dr. Shult who serves as Vice-President of Agriculture for 19 years. His family attended and it was really a heart-felt tribute and celebration.

Speaking of this facility and location, on Thursday October 17, we will host our first Regional Retiree Meeting of the Year at the Don Tyson Building on the Milo J. Shult Research and Extension Center in Fayetteville starting at 10 AM. Brian Helms has a nice program planned and we hope that all of you in NWA can attend and visit. Any day that Extension retirees get together, it turns out to be a good day.

See some of you Thursday and have a great October!

November Birthdays

Mr. Eric Grant, November 3
 Mr. Massie Silva, November 3
 Mrs. Reba Hawkins, November 3
 Ms. Frances Story, November 4
 Dr. Joe Waldrum, November 7
 Mrs. Sue Palsa, November 9
 Ms. Ursula Crow, November 9
 Mr. Jerry McIntyre, November 11
 Mrs. Nita Cooper, November 11
 Mr. Gerald Alexander, November 12
 Miss. Doris Begeman, November 13
 Ms. Patsy Keller, November 15
 Mrs. Gloria Eubanks, November 16
 Mrs. Virlean Fisher, November 18

Ms. Eugenia Hockett, November 18
 Mr. Luther Roberts, November 20
 Mrs. Anita Clark, November 20
 Mr. Joe Vestal, November 22
 Mr. John Philpot, November 23
 Mrs. Brenda Hawkins, November 24
 Ms. Janice Jones, November 24
 Ms. Kathryn Fowler, November 25
 Ms. Jane Kriigel, November 26
 Ms. Rosemary Rodibaugh, November 26
 Mrs. Vatra Hibbs, November 27
 Mrs. Louise McPherson, November 28
 Dr. James Barrentine, November 28
 Mr. Jim Frala, November 30

Scholarship Donations

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

Jim Barrentine


Rex Roberg

Andy Vangilder

In Memory of J.J. Kimbrough

Jim Lee Wallace

In Honor of Gene Woodall

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 that 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. 

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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.

Gladys H. Lindsey passes away

Gladys Lindsey, 92 of Eastman, GA passed away on Sunday, September 29, 2019. Gladys last served as County Extension Agent - Staff Chair in Ouachita Count at the time of her retirement. 

Howard Young passes away

Howard Young, 88 of Atkins passed away on Wednesday, September 25, 2019. Howard last served as County Extension Agent - Staff Chair at the time of his retirement in 1987. 