



McCormicks First Inductees Ag Alumni Hall of Fame

Reese O. McCormick Jr. (class of '42) and his wife Nancy were inducted as the first members of the Virginia Tech Ag Alumni Organization's Hall of Fame Oct. 16 as part of the college's homecoming activities.

The Hall of Fame was established to recognize individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, said John White, associate dean. Portraits of inductees will be displayed in Litton Reaves Hall.

"To those of us with the Virginia Tech Ag Alumni Organization, these two fine people are known as fierce and even fanatical supporters of Virginia Tech and of this college," said

Anne Herring, president of the Ag Alumni Organization. "Their involvement has been a key factor in the success of the Virginia Tech Ag Alumni Organization. And from where I stand, I don't think this college would be what it is today without their keen interest and involvement."

McCormick farmed in his native Pittsylvania County, served as an Extension agent, and then worked for the Farmer's Home Administration. He established an endowed scholarship in memory of his father, and Nancy and their daughters then established an endowed scholarship in Reese's honor. The McCormicks have assisted with fundraising activities for the university and for the



Nancy and Reese McCormick

college.

Well over 300 alumni attended the homecoming activities, making it the most successful alumni events in recent years, White said. The Dairy Club won the award for the best display among the numerous student organizations with exhibits at the event. Other events were a silent auction and a live auction, both raising money for the VTAAO Scholarship Fund.

Continuing Ed Tour Of English Gardens

Robert McDuffie, associate professor of horticulture, is planning a 10-day garden tour of England and Wales next July. The tour is designed as a continuing education opportunity for professionals and enthusiasts in garden design.

For more information, contact McDuffie at (540) 231-7432. Information about the tour is available on his web site (<http://www.bsi.vt.edu/mcduff/>).



Gardening in the Quad

Members of the Soils Judging Team pose near one of four gardens they planted in formerly neglected areas near the Ag Quad. John Galbraith, standing at left, the team's coach, said the gardens were undertaken as a service project by the team, some of whose members are not pictured. Riverbend Nursery of Riner donated 118 plants for the plots, and a number of people and departments contributed materials or talent for the project.

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FROM THE DEAN

Student Clubs Showcase College To the World

By Andy Swiger
Dean



The quality of our students continues to amaze me. Not just their grade point averages or their academic achievements, which are certainly at a level worth bragging about. What I have in mind, rather, is their quality as people.

Our students are gearing themselves up to be productive members of society. In many ways, they are already productive members of society. I look forward to seeing how much further they can go.

An easy way for me to gauge the quality of our students is through the accomplishments of student organizations.

Can anyone really doubt our future when students in the college, led by the Ag Econ/NAMA Club and the Ag Ed Society, raised more than \$6,000 last year to help fellow student Charles Johnson, who faced mounting expenses because of illness. These students threw themselves into a project to help someone in need. They organized, they mobilized, and they came through. And they did it on their own.

The achievement of our chapters of national organizations, and the participation of our students in the affairs of those national organizations are increasing the reputation of the college across the country.

The Block and Bridle Club continues to be an outstanding organization, earning top honors nationally seemingly every year. It has been a high-profile organization for a number of years, bringing home many laurels. The Dairy Club has been named the outstanding dairy club in the U.S. 11 times since 1980.

Our Agronomy Club has grown to one of the largest and most active agronomy student clubs in the nation.

From as few as 12 members just four years ago to as many as 45 active members now, the club is larger than or equivalent in size to clubs at many larger universities. In addition, the club produced two of the five officers of the national organization in 1998, the first time anyone can remember that a school had more than one officer at the national level at the same time.

It's not only at the national level that our student clubs distinguish themselves. The many projects they undertake locally demonstrate their commitment to the community. Whether it's the Food Science Club cleaning up an area of Blacksburg during the town's annual Bloom'n and Groom'n activity, or whether it's the Soil Judging Team planting gardens in unused corners around the Ag Quad, our students and our clubs are adding something to our community.

I can't possibly mention all the clubs that contribute to the reputation of the college and that contribute to the positive environment that makes this college such a special place. Let me just say that they all play an important part in creating the mosaic of the college.

Ag Alumni Officers

Anne Herring (Ag Econ, '87) was elected president of the Virginia Tech Agricultural Alumni Organization. Glenn Anderson (Ag Ed, '68) was elected president-elect, and Jamie Whitacre (Ag Econ, '94) was elected secretary-treasurer. Herring succeeds Brad Bryant, who is now the college's alumni coordinator. For information about VTAAO, call (540) 231-3773.



Anne Herring

Fall is College's Busy Season

By John M. White
Associate Dean and Director

They're back! Almost 1,400 undergraduates and 250 graduate students returned to classes in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences on



John White

Aug. 23. An outstanding class of about 300 freshmen and transfer students joined more than 1,000 returning undergraduates for the fall semester.

Fall semester is an exciting and busy time in CALS. We hosted our College of Agriculture and Life Sciences/College of Natural

Resources joint careers fair on Oct. 7 in Squires Student Center. This year we maxed out the space in the Old Dominion Ballroom and had to cap the number of employer booths at 84. More than 40 of these corporations and state and federal agencies stayed over to the next day to interview students for internships, co-op education and permanent positions.

On the heels of the career fair, CALS hosted the Southern Regional Teaching Improvement Workshop at the Sheraton Four Points in Blacksburg Oct. 10-12. About 100 faculty and administrators from the 14 Southeastern Land Grant Colleges of Food and Agricultural Sciences were in Blacksburg for two days of learn-

ing on the subject: "Educating the Society-Ready Graduate."

This workshop was followed closely by the annual Scholars and Donors Banquet to honor 1999-2000 CALS scholarship recipients and scholarship donors on Oct. 15. Then, of course, we celebrated the 1999 CALS Ag Alumni Reunion on Homecoming Day on Oct. 16. In the meantime, our university and CALS open house programs for prospective new freshmen for fall 2000 were held on the weekends of Sept. 18-19, Oct. 23-24, and Oct. 30-31.

After all that, I am going to need to find a couple of days to travel down to the Outer Banks of North Carolina for some serious surf fishing!

Hatzios Takes Helm Of Experiment Station

Kriton Hatzios took up duties Nov. 1 as director of the Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station and associate dean for research in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

Hatzios was formerly head of the Department of Plant Pathology, Physiology and Weed Science. He succeeds Robert Cannell, who retired.

The Experiment Station performs research on food and fiber systems, their impact on the environment, and natural and human resource issues relating to the future needs of people. It has faculty members at 12 agricultural research and extension centers, and throughout the colleges of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Human Resources and Education, Natural Resources, and the Virginia-Maryland College of

Veterinary Medicine.

Hatzios joined Virginia Tech in 1979 after earning his doctorate at Michigan State University. He also holds a bachelor's degree from the Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki, Greece. He is recognized as a leading researcher in the area of chemical manipulation of crop tolerance to herbicides, as well as in herbicide action and metabolism.

Cannell served as Experiment Station director and associate dean since 1995. He came to Virginia Tech in 1987 from the Welsh Plant Breeding Station and the University College of Wales. He was professor and head of the Department of Crop and

Soil Environmental Sciences from 1987 until being selected as Experiment Station director.



Scholarship Banquet

Richard Crowder, vice president of DeKalb Genetics Corp. and college alumnus, and Dean Andy Swiger visit with Sam Obenshain, emeritus agronomy professor, at the college scholarship banquet Oct. 15. Crowder gave the keynote address to more than 300 scholarship recipients and benefactors.

110 Years of Plant Science

One hundred and ten years ago the beginning of what is now the Department of Plant Pathology, Physiology and Weed Science was established.

In addition to marking the 110th anniversary of the founding of the department Sept. 24, the department also recognized the 50th anniversary of its re-organization in its current structure.

Charles Laughlin, director of the USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, gave the keynote address for the daylong observance. Laughlin earned his doctorate from the department in 1968.

William Alwood, one of the first three faculty members hired by the Virginia Agricultural

Experiment Station in 1888, served as the first head of the department from 1889 to 1904. Over the years, the department has awarded about 400 masters and doctoral degrees, with the first degree dating back to 1898. Many of the graduates of the department have had distinguished careers in academia, government, industry, and private practice.

The department offers master's and doctoral programs in plant pathology and in plant physiology and weed science. In addition, it offers a non-thesis master's program in the general



KRITON HATZIOS, left, welcomes Charles Laughlin, director of the USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, to the 110th anniversary observance of the Department of Plant Pathology, Physiology, and Weed Science.

area of plant protection. The department's 30 faculty members focus on research, teaching, and extension programs in three distinct disciplines key to plant productivity, protection, and quality.

Adaptability Key to Future, New Extension Head Says

The agents and specialists of Virginia Cooperative Extension will continue to find new ways to support the educational needs of Virginians in the rapidly changing, fast-paced world of the 21st Century, said J. David Barrett, newly appointed director of the agency.

"This organization has developed an ability and a flexibility to meet society's needs as it adapted itself to the evolving trends of Virginia during the past decade," Barrett said. "This flexibility and positive outlook will be important assets as we focus on the changing needs of our citizens, communities and industries."

Barrett has served as interim director of the statewide agency since January, when a nationwide

search for a permanent director was launched. He succeeds C. Clark Jones, who became Virginia Tech's vice provost for outreach.

A 26-year veteran of the agency, he began his Extension career as a 4-H agent in Russell County in 1973. He has served as a 4-H program leader in a multi-county district, as director of a multi-county district, as a 4-H Extension specialist, as Extension's assistant director for 4-H, as an assistant to the director of Extension, and as the agency's associate director of field operations.

Barrett earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in forestry from Virginia Tech. He earned a doctorate in cooperative extension education and administration from Ohio State University.



Employee of the Year

Terry Rakestraw, an executive secretary in the Department of Food Science and Technology, was named the college's Employee of the Year. The award, which recognized Rakestraw's contributions to the department, was presented during the college's staff appreciation picnic July 22.

IDENTIFYING INSECTS CRITICAL JOB OF LAB



ERIC DAY takes a break from comparing a specimen with a reference book. Samples arrive in his lab in a variety of containers, including a jelly jar.

More than 1,500 times a year Eric Day looks into a bottle, an envelope, or a mailing tube at someone's problem.

"What I get here come in three categories," Day says. "About half I know what they are immediately; some others I'm pretty sure what they are, but I need to check them out; and then there are those that are just totally bizarre."

The bizarre problems are what make Day's job so important.

Day is the manager of Virginia Tech's Insect Identification Lab. The lab is a small office in the university's Department of Entomology. From there, Day works with agents in Virginia Cooperative Extension's 107 local offices, other entomologists, and many other people who are trying to identify insects.

The lab was established in the late '60's to provide diagnostic backup for Extension agents. Many agents have the expertise to identify many of the common insects that infest homes, attack gardens, or otherwise annoy homeowners. Agricultural agents have an in-depth knowledge of insects that damage crops.

"It's the unusual, the uncommon that are supposed to sent here," he says.

The advent of a new insect

into Virginia's ecosystem can herald the beginning of a years-long battle with far-reaching economic consequences. Gypsy moths, Western corn root-worm, and other insects have invaded parts of Virginia in recent years, causing damage to forest stands, trees and shrubs around homes, and to crops.

Identifying these insects when they first make an appearance gives authorities the chance to take measures to rebuff the incursion or to contain it before it causes economic damage on a widespread scale.

Day doesn't just wait for new insects to arrive in the mail. He

also conducts statewide surveys looking for new and potentially damaging insects. He is the state survey manager for the national Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey program. The state program is a cooperative effort of Virginia Tech, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

"We survey for things we hope we won't find," Day says. "We're looking for pests that could establish themselves in the U.S. We're always looking out for something that doesn't fit."



Smokin' Homecoming

Griffin Brand gets off as quickly on the tractor course at the Ag Homecoming as the Hokies did against Syracuse. Watching are his mom, Bette Brand, and his brothers Logan and Walker (standing). Record times were set by every child negotiating the tractor course, sponsored by the Agricultural Education Society

Dairy Club Places At National Meet

Dairy Club members and advisers traveled to Memphis, Tenn., in June to attend the national meeting of the American Dairy Science Association (ADSA). Club members included Jody Bell, Jeremy Daubert, Jana Edwards, Dee Guyton, Brad Haga, Coleen Mowrey, Randi Pershing, Jessica Potts, Darren Remsburg, Scott Sink, Amanda Stiles, Sara Townsend and Lynnette Wright. Club advisers Michael Barnes, Ray Nebel and David Winston accompanied the students.

The Dairy Club placed first in the yearbook (Milky Way) competition, and placed second in the chapter (by only .2 points) and the scrapbook competitions. Potts and Remsburg placed second in the dairy manufacturing and dairy production paper-presentation contests, respectively.

Sink received the Outstanding ADSA Student Affiliate Member Award and Guyton was elected as Officer at Large of the ADSA Student Affiliate. Virginia Tech students receiving ADSA Academic Achievement Awards recognizing them as in the top 10 percent of their college class included Anita Carmichael, Joel Coble, Coleen Mowrey, Jason Spurlin, Kevin Spurlin and Jaclyn Stewart.

Mellon Honored at Middleburg Event

University President Paul Torgersen unveiled a plaque as he dedicated the Middleburg Agricultural Research and Extension Center to the memory of its donor and patron, the late Paul Mellon. Sept. 24 was observed as the 50th anniversary of the date when Mellon and his wife, Rachel, deeded the 419-acre farm to the university.



Great Year for Dairy Judging Team

The 1999 Virginia Tech Dairy Cattle Judging Team placed second overall among the twenty-seven teams competing in the National Intercollegiate Dairy Cattle Judging Contest held at the World Dairy Expo in Madison, Wis., recently. The team also placed first in oral reasons in two of the three contests entered this fall.

In the national contest, the team was first in the Jersey and Guernsey breed judging, second in Ayrshires and Guernseys, and third high team in linear evaluation competition. Matt Nuckols, Beaverdam, Va., was third high individual, and Amanda Stiles, Woodstock, Va., was fifth high individual overall and third high individual in oral reasons.

Earlier in the fall, the team placed first in oral reasons at both the Eastern States Contest in Springfield, Mass., and at the All-American Contest held in Harrisburg, Pa.

The team placed second at Eastern States, where it was first in both Holsteins and Jerseys. Matt Welsh, Keezletown, Va., was high individual in oral reasons, second high individual overall, and first in Holsteins. Nuckols placed second in oral reasons, third overall, and was first in Jerseys and Shorthorns. Stiles placed ninth in oral reasons and third in Jerseys.

At the All-American, the team was first in oral reasons, and third high team overall. Welsh was fourth high individual overall, sixth in oral reasons, and placed in the top four in three breeds. Stiles placed third in oral reasons, ninth overall, and second in Jerseys and Guernseys. Nuckols was seventh in oral reasons, and Brad Ramsey, Fort Valley, Va., placed fourth in the Brown Swiss breed.

Team coaches are Drs. Michael Barnes and Katharine Knowlton.

Southampton Garden Grows Responsibility

4-H volunteers are helping young people in low-income housing developments in rural Southampton County overcome special problems caused by rural isolation and lack of transportation.

A 4-H Gardening Club established by Virginia Cooperative Extension and with volunteer support from Extension's master gardener program has made a difference for some at-risk youth in Courtland. The children plan, plant and tend a community vegetable garden that provides them with powerful lessons in responsibility and teamwork, as well as a nutritious supplement to their diets.

Young people tend the garden within easy walking distance of their homes. Two master gardeners provide leadership to a 4-H club. Participants in the program, all of whom are enthusiastic about the club, reported learning an appreciation for the work farmers do and for America's agricultural system. They take pride in the garden as well as their own success.

Perhaps the strongest endorsement for the program comes from local court officials, who reported a noticeable decline in cases among young people from the community since the 4-H club was established.



A SOUTHAMPTON 4-Her presents Provost Peggy Meszaros with a vegetable produced in the 4-H community garden. Looking on is a master gardener who advises the youths.

Professor Works to Defeat Insect

Hemlock trees through a wide swath of the Eastern U.S. are succumbing to a tiny insect, and Virginia Tech entomologist Scott Salom hopes another tiny insect can stop it.

Salom is monitoring a colony of Asian beetles that has been introduced into a stand of hemlocks in the Jefferson National Forest to battle the hemlock woolly adelgid. The adelgid feeds on the needles of hemlocks, leading in a few years to the death of the tree.

"There is no natural predator to the hemlock woolly adelgid in the U.S.," Salom said. "It is defoliating the trees, killing them from New England to North Carolina."

Salom joined with U.S. Forest Service forest health specialists in late July in introducing the colony of the Japanese ladybug *Pseudoscymnus tsugae* into the hemlock stand in Giles County. The introduction is part of a 10-state study to determine whether using the beetle will be an effective

way to control the destructive hemlock woolly adelgid.

The destructiveness of that pest has been catastrophic for hemlocks in the region. In fact, Salom said it has the potential to destroy the resource completely. That's because the eastern hemlock, the variety of the tree predominant along the East Coast, has no natural resistance to the



ENTOMOLOGIST SCOTT Salom places predator beetles on a tree to kill the insect killing hemlock trees. Also pictured are Tom McAvoy, foreground, and Warren Mays, senior lab specialists.

insect.

The adelgid, which is thought to have been inadvertently introduced to North America from Asia in the early part of this century, made its first appearance on the East Coast almost 40 years ago. It has established itself along the eastern fringe of the range of eastern and Carolina hemlocks. It is advancing at a rate of about 15 miles per year, with the potential to eventually occupy the entire range of the trees from Georgia and Alabama northward to the Canadian Maritime Provinces, westward midway through Kentucky and Ohio, and into the northern reaches of Michigan and Wisconsin.

"The evidence so far is that they are doing all the things you want a biological control agent to do," he said. "What hasn't been shown is that it will suppress a population [of adelgids] to the point where it keeps the tree healthy."

Students Experience Fair; Fair Experiences Ag

Fun and educational was the combination the Ag Econ/NAMA Club was shooting for when it designed its exhibit at the State Fair of Virginia, "Ag Experience."

Five thousand honey jars later, the effort proved both fun and educational for the club members as well as the public. The honey jars were used by a constant stream of children who mixed corn, soybeans, wheat, rye and barley in an agricultural version of "sand art." The students staffing the exhibit used the "grain art" activity to acquaint youngsters and their parents with the major grains cultivated in Virginia.

At the entrance to the exhibit, visitors had the chance to step into a farm scene - a scene painted by Micki Young with cutouts where visitors' faces could be

photographed in a rural setting.

Another portion of the display created by Kim Hayes showed the step-by-step process by which agricultural products make their way onto store shelves. Monty Schilter and Kelly Beckley created a large map of Virginia showing where the production of various commodities is most prevalent.



CARRIE MONGER assists children with "grain art" jars at the State Fair of Virginia.

Beckley and Chip Jones co-chaired the committee that organized and put on the exhibit. More than 20 students from the Ag Econ/NAMA Club and from the Agronomy Club staffed the exhibit over the two-week fair. Club advisors are Eluned Jones, Dixie Reaves, and Kurt Stephenson.

Organizing the event meant finding sponsors to finance it. Sponsors enlisted by the students were the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation, the Virginia Agribusiness Council, Colonial and Blue Ridge Farm Credit, Delmarva Poultry Industry Inc., the Virginia Association for Biological Farming, the Virginia Council of Farmer Cooperatives, Virginia-North Carolina Select Sires Inc., and Waynesboro Nurseries.



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