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DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE  
RESEARCH & EXTENSION

University of Arkansas System

December 2017

No. 12

## Extension personnel honored with 2017 Excellence Awards

The following Extension personnel were recognized for outstanding achievements during 2017 with Extension Excellence Awards. The awards were presented during the annual faculty and staff conference at the Extension State Office in Little Rock on Dec. 4.

**Kerry Rodtnick**, extension videographer, Communications, was named 2017 Employee of the Year. “Kerry exemplifies the gold standard, the best of extension,” said Dr. Rick Cartwright, Associate Vice President for Agriculture-Extension. “His work ethic, innovation and creativity. That’s what the employee of the year award represents to us: Going above and beyond expectations.”



Kerry Rodtnick receives Employee of the Year award from Dr. Rick Cartwright.

Awards were also given to the following individuals:

- **Classified Employee Early Career Award:** Phalon Montgomery, administrative specialist III
- **County Extension Faculty Early Career Award:** Jennifer Caraway, Miller County agricultural agent
- **State Extension Faculty Early Career Award:** Heidi Ward, assistant professor and veterinarian
- **Project/Program Administrator Early Career Award:** Amy Cole, Digital Media program director for the Office of Information Technology

Team award winners included:

- **County Team Award:** Lawrence and Randolph counties. Team members include Heather Akins, Mike Andrews, Bryce Baldrige, Katrina Causey, Herb Ginn and Sandra McGinnis
- **State Team Award:** The Dicamba Research and Educational Effort. Team members include Tom Barber, Jason Davis, Mary Hightower, Jason Norsworthy, Julie Robinson, Jeremy Ross, Bob Scott and Ples Spradley 

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Wishing you the best  
during this holiday season.  
Merry Christmas and  
Happy New Year.

Your Editorial Board

*Stan Chapman, Lott Rolfe III, Earl Wilson,  
Donald Plunkett, Diane Jones, Tom Leslie,  
Darlene Millard and Ella Geisler*

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## Retirees gather for regional meetings in Jonesboro and Little Rock

The final two of five regional retiree meetings were held Nov. 7 in the Craighead County Extension Office in Jonesboro and Nov. 14 at the Little Rock State Extension Office. Attendance at the Jonesboro meeting was 33 and at the Little Rock meeting was 76. Photos are from the Little Rock meeting. 



## Van Stakemiller, former accounting assistant, dies

Van Mills Stakemiller died Dec. 11 in North Little Rock.

Stakemiller was first employed by Extension in 1964 as a secretary/comptometer operator at the Little Rock State Extension Office and retired as an accounting assistant in 1990.

She was a Methodist and a member of the North Little Rock First United Methodist Church.

She is survived by her sister Pat Blair of Huntsville, Texas; daughters, Judy Barnett of North Little Rock and Marlane Stakemiller of Maumelle; two grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Graveside services were held Dec. 14 at the Arkansas State Veterans Cemetery in North Little Rock. Memorial donations may be made to the United Methodist Committee on Relief ([www.umcor.org](http://www.umcor.org)). 

## Honorary and memorial donations

The following honorary and memorial gifts were received to support professional development opportunities for faculty and staff of the Cooperative Extension Service. This list covers honorary and memorial gifts deposited Nov. 1-30, 2017.

### ■ Cooperative Extension Service Retiree Scholarship

By Stan Chapman

*In memory of Woody Miley*

Honorary or memorial donations may be forwarded to the Development Office, Cooperative Extension Service, 2301 South University Avenue, Little Rock, Arkansas, 72204. 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. 

## Arkansas communities recognized in fight to prevent, reduce obesity at coalition's 10-year celebration

It's an uphill battle to prevent and reduce obesity in Arkansas, one of the nation's most afflicted states, but communities in each of Arkansas' 75 counties are fighting it every day.

Many of those communities were recognized Nov. 30, during the Arkansas Coalition for Obesity Prevention's 10-year celebration, held at the Arkansas Governor's Mansion in Little Rock.

Katrina Betancourt, the coalition's president, told the several hundred people in attendance that their respective efforts to help prevent obesity over the last decade had already had a profound effect on the state's population. "Our communities are healthier because of what you do," she said.

Founded in 2007, the coalition was finally awarded non-profit 501(c)3 status earlier in 2017.

The coalition uses three tiers of recognition in documenting efforts on the part of communities: emerging, blossoming and thriving. Among those recognized Thursday was the City of



Cleveland County Extension agent Leslie Walz, left, and *Cleveland County Herald* publisher Britt Talent, right, were among those whose communities were recognized Nov. 30 for their efforts to prevent and reduce obesity in Arkansas at the Arkansas Coalition to Prevent Obesity 10-year celebration.

Rison, recognized as "blossoming," and surrounding Cleveland County, recognized as "thriving."

Much of Cleveland County's obesity-fighting efforts are tied to Kickstart Cleveland County, a broad-spectrum community and economic development effort supported in part by the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture.

The Division of Agriculture has worked to help reduce and prevent

obesity in Arkansas through multiple fronts over the years, including participating in U.S. Centers for Disease Control-funded programs and regular outreach through Family and Consumer Science extension agents. Establishing walking trails, farm-to-school produce chains and farmers' markets are some of the most successful tools promoted through the Division of Agriculture's efforts.

Rex Nelson, senior editor at the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* and long-time Little Rock resident, spoke to those in attendance, noting that the health of a state's population often has a direct effect on its fortunes.

"I'm talking to a group of economic developers," Nelson said, addressing the crowd. "You may not think of yourselves that way, but you are."

"Arkansas will never meet her full potential until we do more to improve the health of those people who proudly call themselves Arkansans," he said. 

## To our Extension retirees

We hope this issue finds you ready for the holiday season. This is a time when we think of others, and of family, and I sincerely hope you enjoy each moment spent together. These moments with family, and with my kids and grandkids, are increasingly precious and I don't waste any of them, and I hope you do not either.

In this issue, please note our extension colleagues honored at our annual faculty and staff conference on Dec. 4. These colleagues live your legacy of excellence every day, and I am intensely proud of each of them. I am

always impressed, but not really surprised, by the recognition that our folks receive during the year from peers and stakeholders for their fine work. While many of us gripe about the younger generation today, ours give us hope. Frankly, most of my younger colleagues in Extension are better than I was at the same age. I honor them and remain privileged to be their Director.

Speaking of the younger generations, I hope you will continue to keep 4-H youth in your thoughts and hopes. To my thinking, we do not have enough 4-H young people. Society would

certainly be better off with more, yes? At the recent retiree meetings, you heard about our new and continuing efforts to make this happen, but it does take work and money. We launched the 20-20 campaign recently where you can donate \$20 per month through 2020. This does not seem like much, but our goal is for 10,000 people to do this, and if we are successful, that will really add up by the end of 2020 and will frankly enhance 4-H



(Continued, page 4)

**Cartwright, cont.**

beyond what we currently know. Please contact Dr. Martha Ray Sartor or Angie Freels if you need more information. Also remember that we still accept all kinds of conventional donations. Many employees contribute from each pay-check through payroll deduction to better 4-H. Many of us also continue to buy the 4-H license plate, a simple and stylish way to express public support for these great young citizens. If every vehicle in the state sported a 4-H plate, I think that would be great. I would like to simply thank each of you for your past and present support of Extension and 4-H, and I recognize that you have already done your part. I sincerely thank you for that, but if you can help any more, we will take it.

In this issue, you will see more about the fall retiree meetings in different parts of the state. These meetings were the highlight and privilege of the year for me and our executive team, a chance to catch up with each of you and hear how things are going. We will keep doing these, but also know we will have the annual statewide retiree meeting planned for March 16, 2018, at the C.A. Vines Arkansas 4-H Center as before. The annual meeting will be dedicated to “visiting.” We may have a speaker or two, but we want to give all of you time to catch up with each other and with us. We hope you can come.

With regard to the honorary and memorial donations listed in this issue, and that you all are responsible for, I humbly thank you on behalf of Cooperative Extension and on behalf of the families and memories honored. I knew Dr. Woody Miley well, and a finer person never lived. So thank you for all of these.

In this issue, we also note the fight against obesity, obviously one of my challenges if you look at photos of me, but also a huge challenge for our society and especially rural society. I personally think that Extension education is the answer because we have the research-based answers, and Extension is the way to get people to adopt those answers. With enough resources, Extension could solve this problem for Arkansas I believe. With that said, I really appreciate and highlight Cleveland County and the City of Rison for taking this on in their area. I know of no better examples of community leadership than Les Walz, Diane Clement and Britt Talent in that county, working together with the community to make their region a “great place to live, and a great place to make a living.” And now they are tackling one of the most complex challenges, rural health and obesity. Kudos to all.

In regards to complex issues like this, I wish to note to you my sincere thanks to all of our Family and Consumer Sciences faculty and staff for continuing to fight the good fight in this increasingly challenging area of science-based

education. Is there anything more complicated? I doubt it. But, perhaps this makes this profession so rewarding – it is so challenging but also so fulfilling when you see people’s lives changing for the better. And, I am leading up to singling out and direct thanks to one person in Family and Consumer Sciences – a person I have known more than 20 years and absolutely respect and appreciate as the ultimate professional in her field – Dr. Rosemary Rodibaugh. I hope all of you appreciate her contribution to Extension and to your legacy of work in this state as much as I do. She is literally the best.

I will close with a simple “Thank You” to all of our retirees for making Extension what it is, for giving us the opportunity to “carry on,” for laying that great professional foundation on which to build and for exemplifying professionalism and “doing the right thing” in your careers. Our current faculty and staff, and you, make being the Director of Extension a singular and awesome privilege.

I wish all of you the very best over the upcoming holidays and know that if you need me, I will do my best to be there.  
 – Rick Cartwright 

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS		
Richard Kelly Gage, January 1	C. C. Schaller, January 15	Ramona Gordon, January 23
Betty Sutton Harrison, January 3	Glenna M. Duffel, January 17	Donna Rinke, January 23
Earlene D. Brecheen, January 6	Bobby J. Malone, January 17	Barbara G. Ball, January 24
Alva Ray Siler, January 8	Shirley F. Bennett, January 17	Laura L. LaRue, January 24
Mona L. Norris, January 8	Dianne Knuteson, January 17	Margie Jones, January 25
Fann J. Woodward, January 9	Robert Seay, January 17	Nina S. Coffee, January 25
Keith F. Martin, January 9	Shirley W. Cleek, January 18	Don N. Wiley, January 25
Terrie M. Treadway, January 9	Dot Temple, January 18	Shirley G. Hopkins, January 28
Steve Culp, January 11	Douglas Bruce Petty, January 18	Lois Perkins, January 29
Helen K. Nowlin, January 12	Jerry W. Williams, January 20	Gary Huitink, January 29
Ricky L. Thompson, January 14	Marvin L. Wall, January 21	

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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 Martha Thorpe, Communications Dept., 2301 South University Avenue, Little Rock, AR 72204-4940.