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Retiree Spotlight

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**DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION**
University of Arkansas System

Hawkins Enjoying Free Agent Status

When Brenda Hawkins first started working for Extension in May 1973, she never wore a crisp white blouse.

Instead, she always wore dark clothes so the black ink that was thrown from the mimeograph machine while she worked in the office wouldn't be as visible.

By the time she retired, she could wear whatever she liked and the only threat to the material was a random soil sample – or snake – that might be brought into the office by a farmer.

"I never knew what people were going to bring in," she said with a laugh.

Hawkins, who served as the Extension secretary in Faulkner County for 40 years, retired in December 2014, and she often misses her job and the people she worked with. She still remembers how she felt at her retirement party as she looked out at the people who were there to celebrate with her.

"They're family, that's what kept coming to mind," she recalled. "I considered everybody there my family. After all those years, you do become like family."

Hawkins said she not only cared deeply for her co-workers but also about the people her Extension office served.

The first few weeks after Hawkins retired, there was record snowfall in Faulkner County. After being cooped up inside her house with no job to try to get to, she wondered what she had done with this whole retirement thing. When the snow thawed and she could get out and about, she started to enjoy being a free agent.

First up, Hawkins started leading a Bible study during the day. She'd always wanted to do that but previously wasn't able to join one during work hours. She also started spending more time with friends and felt freer to continue some of the activities she'd been enjoying for many years, like Monday Night Pizza Night.

She and friends started having pizza every Monday night years ago, but they've since branched out and try new restaurants on occasion.

"We're still the pizza group, but we might not go to get pizza," she said.

She's also part of a group that travels together. Her husband, Joel, is a Master Gardener and the principal at a busy CPA business, so he's often unable to join her on trips.

The Hawkins have one daughter, Krissie Talley, and they often visit Krissie and her family – which includes her husband, Eley, and their five children – in Nashville, Arkansas.

Hawkins said she enjoys visiting her daughter's home, which not only includes the grandchildren, but goats, llamas, chickens and other creatures.

The family usually vacations together every year. In fact, the whole extended family is headed to Florida in early July for a vacation. The youngest grandchildren, twin boys, will turn 5 while they're at the beach. The other grandchildren are ages 17, 15 and 12.

Hawkins still keeps in touch with her extended Extension family and occasionally slips up and says "we" when talking to her daughter about Extension news. *(Continued, page 3)*



Brenda Hawkins

Jesse Clark Still Involved in Doing Things for Other People

Jesse Clark was busy cooking up steak at Keeney's Food Market, a staple in Malvern for more than 60 years, just before taking a few minutes out to be interviewed for the *Extension Cord*.

The store owner occasionally asks Clark to help run things when he needs to be out, and Clark is happy to oblige. The two met when Clark first started working for Extension and Charles Keeney was the president of the Arkansas Cattlemen's Association and a staunch 4-H supporter.

Clark started working for Extension in October 1973, just a few months after he graduated from Southern University in Baton Rouge. He was supposed to start on the 15th but had car trouble on the way to the new job and had to sleep in his Pontiac Bonneville overnight.

"I started a day and a half late," he said with a laugh.

Clark, one of 16 children and at the time the new father of a daughter, Sharon, took the job of agriculture - 4-H agent in Lewisville in Lafayette County. He jumped in with both feet - and got his hands dirty immediately - working with more than 500 4-H'ers and 23 clubs. He and the three program assistants who worked with him had to attend most of the club meetings or they wouldn't have a leader. Some days he attended multiple club meetings.

Clark enjoyed the students, and they took 92 4-H'ers to his first District 4-H O-Rama.

In 1978, Clark was promoted to staff chair in Hot Spring County after the current chair retired due to heart issues. Clark was the youngest chair in the state and was also one of only two African-American men in that post.

Clark went on to become the first minority president of the Arkansas Agricultural Agents



Jesse and Edna Clark in front of Cheers Restaurant in Boston, Massachusetts

Association. He has been active since 1988 in the association and has continued to be involved since retiring as staff chair in Hot Spring County in May 2014, after nearly 41 years with Extension. Clark will help with the national association meeting in Little Rock next month.

Clark, the father of two grown daughters (his son, Jacquard, passed away in 2010) and grandfather to four granddaughters, stays busy with other volunteer work as well since retiring. He spends several hours a week keeping the Hot Spring County 4-H Youth Center rented out to various groups. While he was staff chair, he was instrumental in raising \$160,000 to renovate an old skating rink to be used as a gathering place for 4-H youth.

He also still helps with Extension fundraisers like the local pancake breakfast and the fishing derby, which he helped start in 1979. The derby has grown so

much that there were nearly 300 kids fishing in the tournament held last month at a private pond.

Clark has also been on the local school board since 1989, is chairman of the United Way, chairman of the Salvation Army board, on the zoning board and vice chairman of Libby's R.O.S.E., a Hot Spring County nonprofit.

He's also a trustee at his church as well as the superintendent of Sunday school there.

"I enjoy doing things for other people," he said, adding, "If we don't do it, who's going to?"

When he's not helping out a friend, booking the 4-H Youth Center or working on his various boards, Clark and his wife, Edna, who's also retired, enjoy traveling. The Clarks always took their children on trips every summer, and they've continued to visit all over the U.S. and beyond.

Clark has been to every state except Maine and Alaska. Many of those states were marked off the list when he was staff chair and took 4-H'ers on exchange trips. He loved his job and enjoys keeping up with the kids on Facebook or just seeing them - and their parents or former 4-H leaders - around town.

Clark noted: "I always said, 'I can't believe they pay me to do this'."

To reconnect with Jesse Clark, contact him at 501-337-3218, P.O. Box 625, Malvern, Arkansas, 72104. - Shannon Magsam

Bereavement

Jimmie Jeaneane Henderson Markham, former Extension home economics agent in Howard and Independence counties and wife of retired area Extension horticulture agent Jerry Markham, died May 21 at Baptist Medical Center in Little Rock.

From the Editorial Board

Division Personnel, Work Featured on AETN's 'AgriArkansas'

- If you hadn't already discovered this, the Arkansas Educational Television Network has been featuring Division personnel since the program began airing last year. If you missed them, you may view them at the links listed below.
- April 2015 – Stacey McCullough, interim assistant director - Community and Economic Development, talking about AgriTourism. http://www.aetn.org/programs/agriarkansas/april_2015
 - June 2015 – Jennie Popp, professor - AgriBusiness and Agricultural Economics; Tamara Walkingstick, associate director - Arkansas Forest Resources Center; and former extension agent Melissa Beck talk about women in agriculture. http://www.aetn.org/programs/agriarkansas/june_2015
 - September 2015 – John Payne, retired extension agent, talking about River Valley agriculture. http://www.aetn.org/programs/agriarkansas/september_2015
 - October 2015 – Vic Ford, director of the Southwest Research and Extension Center, talks about agriculture on the Gulf Coastal Plain. http://www.aetn.org/programs/agriarkansas/october_2015
 - December 2015 – Dustan Clark, extension veterinarian, talks about avian flu in the segment on agriculture in the Ozarks. Harrison Pittman, director of the National Agricultural Law Center, is a panelist. http://www.aetn.org/programs/agriarkansas/december_2015
 - March 2016 – This edition focuses on the work of the Cooperative Extension Service in Arkansas, with interviews and discussion with Tony Windham, associate vice president - Agriculture-Extension; Joe Waldrum, recently retired as head of the LeadAR program; Vic Ford; Chuck Wilson, director of the Northeast Research and Extension Center; and Kelly Bryant, director of the Southeast Research and Extension Center. Just-retired Clay County Extension Staff Chair Andy Vangilder talks about resistant pigweed. http://www.aetn.org/programs/agriarkansas/march_2016
 - John Clark's overview of the Division's fruit breeding efforts will be among the features in an upcoming 'AgriArkansas.'

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Honorary and Memorial Gifts

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 May 1-31, 2016.

■ Cooperative Extension Service Retiree Scholarship

Portia Short

In honor of Margaret Alexander

In honor of Fann Woodward

In memory of Ann Brown

In memory of Betty Oliver

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In memory of Jean Frisby

In memory of Dennis Millard

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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.

Brenda Hawkins (cont.)

"I was always proud to be an Extension employee," she said. "I still say 'my office' because I still think of Extension as mine."

To reconnect with Brenda Hawkins, contact her at 501-327-0466, 312.5 Donnell Ridge Road, Conway, Arkansas, 72034.

– Shannon Magsam

Cooperative Extension Service
2301 South University Avenue
Little Rock, AR 72204-4940

July Birthdays

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Mike Hedges, July 1 | Thomas Vaughns, July 12 |
| Randy Chlapecka, July 3 | Dolores McBride, July 14 |
| John Gunter, July 3 | Candace Carrié, July 15 |
| James Jefferson, July 3 | Patsy Stephens, July 16 |
| Wanda Pemberton, July 3 | James Aikman, July 17 |
| Shirley Hesselschwerdt, July 4 | Joyce Whittington, July 19 |
| Jane Mowry, July 5 | Leon Ferguson, July 20 |
| Mary Dunn, July 6 | John Boyd, July 21 |
| Debbra Still, July 6 | J.B. Williams, July 21 |
| Millie Jo Collins, July 7 | Helen Glass, July 22 |
| Betty Archer, July 8 | Gail Kizer, July 22 |
| Winfred Hart, July 8 | Virginia Cottrell, July 24 |
| Quinton Hornsby, July 8 | Relda Washburn, July 24 |
| Carolyn Lewis, July 8 | David Foster, July 25 |
| Dayton Thomason, July 8 | Ruben Johnson, July 28 |
| Raymond Webb, July 8 | Wanda Shelby, July 28 |
| Howard Young, July 9 | Tommy Thompson, July 29 |
| Jim Bemis Jr., July 10 | Henry Bowden, July 30 |
| Elizabeth Childs, July 10 | Madlyn Mason, July 30 |
| Linda Gaye Tanner, July 10 | Edwin Colburn, July 31 |
| Carolyn Burns, July 12 | |

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

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