A Tribute

Former Dean Charles Barnhart
Loved Kentucky, Its Agriculture, and People

He was born in Illinois and raised in Indiana, but his name will forever be linked with Kentucky agriculture.

Dr. Charles E. Barnhart, who died April 1, served the state as an animal science professor, swine researcher, and as dean of the College of Agriculture from 1948 until his retirement in 1988. The state’s agricultural industry emerged during those years, and his name is etched on many of its mileposts.

“He had a great impact on this state,” said veteran Kentucky farm broadcaster Jack Crowner, who knew and worked with Dean Barnhart for more than two decades. “He knew the importance of helping small farmers and beginning farmers, and he understood how important it was to use radio and television and other media to communicate new research.”

Dean Barnhart was known for his ability to make things happen. During his tenure, the College of Agriculture and the Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station experienced tremendous growth, and UK’s Cooperative Extension Service was restructured to encourage better communication with clients. Several buildings were constructed, including the UK Research and Education Center at Princeton, and many facilities were modernized.

“He was very aggressive in moving the College of Agriculture forward,” said Daviess County agricultural leader Bill Kuegel, who worked with Dean Barnhart on many projects over the years. “He believed in the school and the people of this state.”

“He loved seeing people be successful,” said John Robertson, former associate dean for instruction in the College. Robertson was both an undergraduate and a doctoral student under Barnhart and first met him in 1949.

“I took a course with him as a freshman, and he was still in his 20s,” Robertson said. “Some World War II veterans in the class were as old or older than he was, but he was a challenging teacher and interacted well with everyone and inspired us. We enjoyed his teaching style.”

Robertson said Dean Barnhart was a man who believed in the land-grant mission, and his top priority was service to farmers and the state.

“He always said ‘remember who you work for,’” said Robertson. “He had a great love for Kentucky. He loved its winding roads, its history, its tradition, and its people. He’ll be remembered as a giant in the state’s agriculture industry.”

In 1987, Dean Barnhart’s induction into the Livestock Hall of Fame by the Saddle and Sirloin Club was recognition of his place among the industry’s most distinguished leaders. In 2001, the University named its agricultural engineering building the Charles E. Barnhart Building. It stands as an enduring tribute to a visionary leader who dedicated his life to making a difference in the state he loved.

Charles E. Barnhart
1923 - 2007

Skees Named Great Teacher

THE UK ALUMNI ASSOCIATION HAS HONORED JERRY SKEES, professor of agricultural economics, as a 2007 recipient of its Great Teacher Award. Skees has established himself as a leader in innovative agricultural insurance programs in the United States and around the world. He has assisted in developing new markets for sharing catastrophic risk in more than 20 lower-income countries. In particular, his work has led to new insurance products in the United States, Mongolia, India, and Peru. The Mongolia project won the World Bank’s Golden Plough Award in 2006.

Skees has published more than 100 research articles and is the co-author of the award-winning book Sacred Cows and Hot Potatoes: Agrarian Myths in Agricultural Policy. The University of Kentucky Alumni Association annually recognizes six professors as Great Teachers and honors each of them with a plaque and a $2,000 cash award. It is the oldest, continuously given award for teachers at the University of Kentucky.

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Van Pelt Puts Degree to Work

BILLY VAN PELT ’97 may have been destined for his current job. His family farmed in Woodford County for three generations, and he earned a landscape architecture degree from the College. This background has given Van Pelt a sense of mission about preserving the rural landscape of Lexington and Fayette County.

That’s appropriate for someone who is director of the Purchase Development Rights (PDR) Program for Lexington-Fayette Urban Government. It’s a program that uses local, state, and federal funds to purchase conservation easements on Fayette County farms.

Already, it is preserving more than 18,000 acres of productive farmland. (For more information on PDR go to http://www.flucg.com/pdr.)

Van Pelt has high praise for how the College helped prepare him for his work.

“Landscape architecture is about stewardship of the land,” he said. He believes its faculty “is 110% supportive of your career.”

Van Pelt is serving on two committees for the Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games that will be held in Lexington in 2010. One is to help Fayette and surrounding counties promote regional tourism opportunities. The other is looking at how to use the games as a springboard to strengthen the connection of Fayette County citizens to the county’s equine heritage.

As the games approach, the College is making improvements to what is now UK’s Maine Chance Equine Campus as part of Central Kentucky’s equine landscape. It will support the games in other ways as well.

Billy Van Pelt

Greenup Gets Fine Arts Agent

NEARLY THREE YEARS AGO, Kentucky became the first state in the nation to have a fine arts extension agent. Now extension is growing the arts again. Cora Hughes is working in Greenup County as the state’s second fine arts extension agent. Hughes, a music teacher for 28 years, was a natural fit for the position—she had just come off a five-year stint as program coordinator of the UK Opera Theatre.

Greenup County has a rich cultural heritage in music and the arts, Hughes said, and she is excited about encouraging growth in those areas.

“I have a hope of bringing tourism dollars and recognition to the many artisans and artists in this county,” she said. “I look forward to the ongoing possibility of working with all of the schools in Greenup to help promote and maintain the arts in the schools.”

This past summer, Hughes integrated fine arts into the local 4-H Cloverbud Camp and a heritage festival. She also set up a committee to organize a countywide “Growing with the Arts” children’s chorus that begins this fall. Future plans include the writing and production of an outdoor musical drama based on the works of Jesse Stuart, a Greenup native and well-known American writer. Hughes also hopes to bring the UK Orchestra and the UK Opera Theatre to the area for special school programs.

Cora Hughes

By Haven Miller

news in brief

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Cora Hughes

By Haven Miller
Jimmy Henning Learned Value of Extension Early

1990s, he demonstrated to Kentucky the greatest satisfaction. In the mid-accomplishments have given him side, as Henning calls it, two on the “pure science” years.

Henning earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees in agronomy from Georgia and a Ph.D. from UK. After a stint at the University of Missouri, Henning returned to Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service, which includes specialists and agents working in family and consumer sciences, community and economic development, agriculture and natural resources, and 4-H youth development.

“Jimmy gathered up a group of faculty in different disciplines to go out and look at the fields to see what they could come up with as hypotheses.”

“Several testable ideas emerged, and one of them—eastern tent caterpillars—proved to be correct,” Barrett said. “And,” he said, “after MRLS first hit, Jimmy kept communication going to the farms.”

Most recently, Henning has been assistant extension director for agricultural and natural resources.

People respected what they said.”

“They need to know how to get help for the issues they’re up against.”

Kentucky Cooperative Extension’s new leader may have traveled some miles from Georgia to Kentucky, but it’s apparent he’s not forgotten those early lessons about what extension can do.

Oh, the Sights They Saw!

SEVENTEEN STUDENTS from the College took a 10-day study tour to Japan in May. The students, from the Departments of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture, toured Kyoto and Tokyo. They saw sights including an ancient moss garden (top left) and a shrine to former emperors (bottom left). Faculty members Bob McNeill and Bob Geneve in Horticulture and Tom Nieman in Landscape Architecture led the trip. It wasn’t all touring. One night students at Kyoto University conducted a seminar on Japanese gardens for the UK group, and the next night Nieman talked to the Japanese students about land use in the Bluegrass.

Vincelli and Hershman Earn National Award

PAUL VINCELLI and DON HERSHMAN, both in the Department of Plant Pathology, have received national recognition of their work from the American Phytopathological Society.

Vincelli has earned the organization’s award for excellence in teaching and Hershman for excellence in extension.

Vincelli’s students continue to give him high marks for his teaching. He also “teaches” the general public through extension presentations—more than 300 to date—and through a variety of media, from newsletters to educational DVDs.

Hershman, who works out of the UK Research and Education Center in Princeton, is responsible for statewide educational and applied research programs in soybean disease management. He was part of a national team of scientists and agents working in family and consumer sciences, community and economic development, agriculture and natural resources, and 4-H youth development.

“Jimmy Henning, son of a county agent, was interested in extension before he could even spell the word.”

“I saw the job satisfaction that my father experienced,” said Henning, newly appointed associate dean for extension and assistant director of the Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service. “The agents were doing good. People respected what they said.”

He grew up as a 4-H’er under his father’s tutelage, eventually setting his sites on becoming an extension specialist.

Henning earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees in agronomy from Georgia and a Ph.D. from UK. After a stint at the University of Missouri, Henning returned to Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service, which includes specialists and agents working in family and consumer sciences, community and economic development, agriculture and natural resources, and 4-H youth development.

“I want people to know they’re connected to campus,” he said. “They need to know how to get help for the issues they’re up against.”

Kentucky Cooperative Extension’s new leader may have traveled some miles from Georgia to Kentucky, but it’s apparent he’s not forgotten those early lessons about what extension can do.

Connections like this were one of the main reasons for the creation of MarketMaker, an online, interactive mapping system that locates businesses and markets of agricultural products in Kentucky to provide an important link between producers and consumers. The program comes to Kentucky through the collaborative efforts of the UK College of Agricultural, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, the Governor’s Office of Agricultural Policy, and Allied Food Marketers.

As of late August, Kentucky was only the fifth state to be part of this national program. It was developed by University of Illinois Extension.

“We’re excited it’s now available to our Kentucky agricultural producers and food-related businesses,” said Steve Isaacs, Cooperative Extension assistant director for community and economic development. For a closer view, visit Kentucky MarketMaker (http://www.marketmakerky.com). If you’d like more information contact Bob Perry, UK Food Systems Initiative coordinator, at 859-267-8890.