

Dean's Newsletter 2014



It's a pleasure for me to say hello to our alumni and to use this opportunity to reflect on the growth that has occurred at NCTA in 2013-2014. This has been my first year as Dean and it's been an outstanding experience. I've learned NCTA is a friendly and special college where people work hard, care about each other, and strive to do what's best for the members of our college community

We celebrated our Centennial anniversary this past year – 100 years of excellent service to the agricultural communities in Nebraska. And now we have developed a new strategic plan to chart a course into our second century.

NCTA is preparing students for a profession that will look very different from what we have known in the past – a profession full of tremendous opportunity and potential. World population by 2050 is projected to increase by 2 billion people, and 60 to 90% more food will be required to feed this growing world. Together, NCTA and the University of Nebraska system are well positioned to educate and prepare students and our profession for this challenge.

We have modified programming to maximize student benefit and opportunity. Starting this fall, NCTA students will find new scholarship offerings, making college even more affordable. Over the past three years, 91% of our students received financial aid. For Nebraska residents, the average grant and scholarship award exceeded tuition and fees by \$700 per year.

After completing their associate degree, NCTA students can more easily pursue a bachelor's degree. In fall 2014, students can enroll in UNL's Bachelors of Applied Science program while remaining in residence on the Curtis campus. Or, if they wish to transfer to Lincoln to complete a bachelor's, we have new "Reverse Transfer" and "Link to Lincoln" agreements in place.

Also this fall, NCTA offers new academic studies and certificates for Laboratory Animal Care, Equine Training Management, Irrigation Technology, and an Agricultural Education concentration. We brought back the agricultural mechanics program and welding, engines, and other agricultural mechanics classes. It's an exciting time to be at NCTA!

Our success is defined by the goals we set, whether individually, as a college, a family, a business or an organization. Thank you for all that you have done for the college, and for our success.

Please let us know if there's anything we can do to help you with your activities and goals. I look forward to seeing you at alumni weekend in September.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ron Rosati". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Ron Rosati

UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska
NCTA

NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF
TECHNICAL AGRICULTURE

NSA, UNSA, UNSTA, NCTA All-school Alumni Weekend

Sept. 12-13-14-2014

Registration form inside!

Critters and branding irons

Bring your livestock branding irons and judging notebook, along with livestock savvy, for some of the Saturday fun alumni weekend!

The NCTA livestock judging team will host AggieFest 4, a judging contest starting at 1 p.m. in the Livestock Teaching Center arena. The \$15 registration fee goes to benefit the team, coached by Doug Smith.

Then, at 4 p.m., Dan Stehlik bids all alumni to permanently leave a mark on campus by branding two wooden benches with their livestock brand. One bench will remain at the campus, with the other auctioned at the Saturday evening banquet. Funds go toward student alumni scholarships.

Newsletter Writing and Design by

Mary Crawford and Eric Reed

Two 50-year alumni launch Aggie website

Ken Mercer and Jack Andersen, 1964 graduates of the University of Nebraska School of Agriculture (UNSA), joined creative forces and in the summer of 2013 compiled a wonderful photo archive of school history on the Internet.

Their website, curtisaggie.com, is dedicated to the high school alumni of the Nebraska School of Agriculture (NSA) and UNSA, says Mercer, who now lives in Carrollton, Texas.

He had been concerned alumni would lose touch, and that the more-recent decades of graduates and families should be able to explore this important history to Curtis.

Now, thousands of student graduates, faculty and staff, and their families associated with the institution can view yearbooks, photos and archives on line. It includes a searchable format from 1913-1968 to find students and faculty by last name. Students can also be located by home town or class year.

"The availability and access to the Alumni Room in Ag Hall was important to the research," noted Mercer. "And, we appreciated much-needed help from the staff at NCTA."

Mercer scanned many pages from old yearbooks, and enlisted the help of classmate, Jack Andersen of Lakeside, in designing the website. Together, they entered data for thousands of students. Currently, the on-line data includes 3,561 classmates from 240 towns.

"There are many names where we do not have a home town listed, so we appreciate help in locating that information or correcting errors," Andersen said.

Information can be sent to Mercer and Andersen by using the "Contact Form" at <http://www.curtisaggie.com/contact.php>. Or, they also manage a social page on Facebook at www.facebook.com/CurtisAggie.

Alumni Association 2014 Awards

This is the fifth year to confer alumni association awards. NCTA is fortunate with a wealth of worthy individuals. Consider a nomination of someone for an award:

Alumni Achievement – Recognizes exemplary service to NSA, UNSA, UNSTA, or NCTA or to Nebraska agriculture and natural resources, in general. The honoree must have completed a degree here.

Alumni Service – For outstanding service to NSA, UNSA, UNSTA, or NCTA. The recipient need not be a graduate.

Honorary Life Membership – For outstanding service to Nebraska's agriculture or natural resources; recipient is not an alumnus.

Distinguished/Legacy Award – Recognizes personal or professional excellence in advancing the legacy of NSA, UNSA, UNSTA or NCTA, or for demonstrating exemplary commitment, leadership, and participation bringing distinction to themselves, their profession, the technical college, or to the NU system.

Recipients are selected by a committee, recognized at the annual banquet with a plaque, and at the campus Wall of Fame. All areas do not have to be awarded each year. Nominations can be made by anyone, by providing a description of the nominee's achievements and short summary of service by August 15, 2014 to Dan or Kim:

NCTA Alumni President
Mr. Dan Stehlik
1590 N. 110th Road
Concordia KS 66901
dstehlik@usd109.org

NCTA Alumni Vice President
Mrs. Kim Mortensen
39458 Road 750
Curtis NE 69025
akmort@curtis-ne.com

2013 award recipients include: R. P. Smith, Distinguished/Legacy Award

Walter Long, DVM, 87

Dr. Walter Long, who founded and chaired the veterinary technology program at UNSTA in 1968, died at his home in Hastings on June 30. He was 87.

The Lincoln native had served in the U.S. Navy, taught agriculture and physics at Minatare High School, earned his veterinary doctorate from Colorado A&M (Colorado State) and owned a private practice in Burwell before coming to Curtis.

His one-of-kind technical instruction in the old dairy barn led to one of the first accredited veterinary technology programs in the United States. When the vet tech school moved into a new complex in 1986, the barn's future became uncertain. Fortunately, it was preserved among campus construction and renovations and dedicated in 2011 as the Dr. Walter Long Veterinary Teaching Clinic.

Hundreds of students learned life, leadership and technical skills under his tutelage until his retirement in 1990, when he and Judie moved to Hastings. College-related memorials are suggested to the NCTA Veterinary Technology Scholarship Fund, or the Dr. Walter Long NCTA Veterinary Teaching Clinic Fund, both managed by the NU Foundation.

Survivors include wife, Judie Long, and daughter, Rebecka Long of Hastings, daughter Andrea Long Perlow of Concord N.H., and son Paul Long of Virginia Beach, Va., three grandchildren and special cousin, Mary Lou Pritchard of Lincoln.



Aggie of the Year ideal fit at NCTA

- "Perfect role model for others, an outstanding young man, goes above and beyond."

Many more descriptions can define the NCTA 2014 Aggie of the Year Patrick Zochol, a livestock production systems student.

Zochol hails from a family farming and cattle feeding operation, Zochol Feedlot, located northeast of Alliance. He plans to graduate in 2015.

A circuitous path after 1995 high school graduation led Zochol to a great fit at NCTA where he is active with the ranch horse and equestrian teams and unofficially declares his steady canine companion, Hustler, as team mascot.

Another of the well-known animals around campus is his horse, Hollywood. Zochol has always been around horses and the outdoors.

On the path to NCTA, he was a ski lift mechanic in Aspen, elk hunt guide



in Colorado, staffer at a 5-star resort in Arizona, student for three semesters at UNL, and cowboy with a horse outfit in the Pacific Northwest for a few years.

In a new campus position created in 2013 as student facility manager of the Livestock Teaching Center, Zochol brings an enjoyable experience and strong ethic to working alongside faculty, staff and students.

"Pat is one of the most upstanding students at NCTA as he works hard in all areas while being a perfect role model for others," notes equine professor Jo Hergenreder.

His duties include arena management and upkeep, maintaining a safe and sure-footed surface for riders, horses and stock, particularly with water applications and equipment operations.

He's an enthused and inspiring student. For a semester, Zochol served as a residence hall assistant. He is in Phi Theta Kappa honor society, served as the student senate representative for both the equestrian and ranch horse teams, and was treasurer of the equestrian team.

So far, a highlight of his NCTA career has been riding at the collegiate nationals in Loveland, Colo. at the American Stock Horse Association competition.

"I really appreciate the education I am getting at NCTA," Zochol says. "The faculty and facilities – it is all top shelf. Unlimited potential is being realized every day."

NCTA Successes 2014

Scholarships

- Evey Choat - Wolgamott Scholarship
- Heather Mang Matuke and Kristy Trumbo - Castle Scholarship

Graduation

- Kellie F. Sholes - Valedictorian
- Jeff Hanhardt - Salutatorian

UNL Parent's Award

- Jo Bek, Professor
- Douglas Smith, Assistant Professor
- Tina Smith, Admissions and Recruiting
- Eric Reed, Assistant Professor

Quality Resonates

- Paid applications are up 55% from a year ago
- Paid applications are 33% above the last 3-year average
- Housing contracts for all students are up 43% from last year
- By July, housing contracts for incoming freshmen were up 80%

Achievements

- In 2013, NCTA's Veterinary Technology program was recognized as one of the top 10 large animal vet tech programs in the United States by VetTechColleges.com
- NCTA has the highest graduation rate of any public two-year college in Nebraska - 60% above the national average
- In 2014 national academic competitions, NCTA teams did very well - agribusiness and general knowledge bowl won 1st places, ag computers won 2nd place, and agronomy won 3rd



NCTA – all in the family

Generations of relatives have cracked the books in Curtis, ridden horses at Aggie Land, competed in rodeo, sports and judging events, or managed crops and livestock – all on the pathway to learning.

Emily Nelson of Ogallala, who will graduate in 2015, and her father, Brent (UNSTA '81), join April Gibson-Hartman (NCTA 2014), and her father, Steve Gibson (UNSTA '77) of Paxton, as two examples of familial collegiate bonds.

Although there's a long history of family traditions, along with four various titles on the diplomas of the alumni who have matriculated at the 101-year old campus, there's always been just one mascot, the Aggie.

Graduates hail from the Nebraska School of Agriculture (NSA) high school from 1913 to 1968, or from one of three colleges -- University of Nebraska School of Agriculture (UNSA) and University of Nebraska School of Technical Agriculture (UNSTA). Then, in 1965, the school got its fourth title, the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture (NCTA).

Curtis native Ken Mercer, UNSA '64, now of Carrollton, Texas researched his family tree (including second and third cousins) and was surprised to discover 57 relatives were also schooled at the campus.

Locating graduation photographs and other archives proving the campus lineage "was like finding a gold mine!" Mercer said.

For many in agriculture, a college close to home is important.

"I was very interested in agriculture and it was not far away from Ogallala so I was able to go home on weekends," said Brent Nelson, who farms. "I rode back and forth with some guys here. It was a good fit for me."

He and wife, Mary Jane's son, Peter, attended for one year and returned to the farm. When their daughter was looking at college, Brent suggested NCTA.

Emily has had success in summer internships at Simplot at Hershey, this summer, and 21st Century Equipment in Ogallala in 2013. She hopes to work for an agriculture company upon graduation.

The family is glad NCTA survived the budget woes of the 80s, where Emily is ultra-busy as vice president of Collegiate Farm Bureau, treasurer of Collegiate Cattlemen, serving in the student senate last and next term, and enjoying intramural football, softball and volleyball.

The small campus, friendly and supportive atmosphere, and ability to focus on specific areas of interest also attracted the Gibson father-daughter duo.

While Steve Gibson's primary income comes as a driver with Crete Carrier Corp., he and wife, Carol, also own and manage a vineyard at their home near Paxton.

The UNSTA '77 horticulture graduate says he's always had an interest in horticulture. Soon, his daughter April, will join the family alumni ranks and chose equine management as her specialty while a "non-traditional" student.

She graduated from Paxton High School in 2000, lived in Arizona and worked at guest ranches and stables, returning to Nebraska and an uncertain future. Her initial courses at Mid-Plains Community College in North Platte confirmed her love of horses, so she started taking NCTA courses on line.

"I really have enjoyed the work with the horses, the horse show team, and working with the students," says the recently-married April Gibson-Hartman. She took a week away from duties as NCTA's horse herd and barn manager to marry fiancé Shawn Hartman in July.

A highlight of her 2013-2014 year was learning more skills from the advanced training class, and working with an array of horses in age and training levels. Over the summer, April continued her daily care of the horse herd in feeding and exercising the horses.



Emily and Brent Nelson

Rancher, cowboy poet, teacher

Alumni in the news

Marilyn Fentress Morrow of Tekamah celebrated her 40th year in business as Morrow's Kennel's with an open house and ribbon cutting of the kennel, grooming and office building that she and husband, Cliff, built at their rural home. Marilyn (UNSTA, Vet Tech, '71) and Cliff (UNSTA Ag Business, '71) - congrats!

David Bruntz of Friend (UNSTA, Production Ag '71) was appointed in August, 2013, by Gov. Heineman to represent District 1 on the Nebraska Corn Board. David and his family raise irrigated and dry land corn and soybeans, along with feeding cattle. He was 2012-2013 UNSTA-NCTA Alumni President.

In December, 2013, **David and Ann Bruntz** were jointly inducted into the Nebraska Cattlemen Hall of Fame. David (UNSTA, PA, '71) and Ann Ramm (UNSTA, Vet Tech, '71) were recognized "for their role in shaping, promoting and preserving the beef industry." David is a past president of the Nebraska Cattlemen, and Ann had served as president of the Nebraska (Cattle) Feeders Auxiliary.



R.P. Smith, a cowboy poet and fourth generation rancher from Custer County, came to the NCTA Centennial in August, 2013 to tell some stories.

Instead, by the weekend's end, he was part of the story as the UNSTA/NCTA Alumni Association honored Smith, an UNSTA graduate from 1980, with its "Distinguished Legacy Award."

He regaled friends and alumni on Friday night during opening activities with his stories and poetry, and shared more at the Saturday banquet when Alumni Association President-Elect Dan Stehlik lauded Smith for his dedication to the Century-old college and its program.

Smith was honored for excellence in advancing the legacy of NSA, UNSTA and NCTA and demonstrating exemplary commitment, leadership, and participation to agriculture and the school.

As is often the case in a busy ranching family where duties are split in opposite

directions, Smith's wife, Beth who is an UNSTA vet tech alumnae, was riding herd with some of their children at a high school rodeo.

"I hated to miss the Centennial and seeing so many friends!" Beth lamented later. The couple has 6 children, some adults and some still in high school, all very active in the family's ranch in some capacity when around the place. Daughter, Hannah, takes after her Dad in the public speaking front winning awards in FFA and 4-H, and serving as FFA chapter president.

R.P. contributes regularly to helping NCTA students in writing and communications, said Eric Reed, NCTA's English instructor. And, wherever Smith travels, he encourages youth and audiences by sharing about his faith in God, passion for agriculture, family and the land, the humorous side of rural life.

Congratulations and a hearty thank you to a humble cowboy and alumnus!

***"Discover Your Way at NCTA" at the newly-revised website:
ncta.unl.edu.***

**NSA, UNSA, UNSTA, NCTA
All-school Alumni Weekend
September 12-13-14, 2014**

*Honor Classes – 1969, 1974, 1979, 1984
1994, 1999, 2004, 2009 and 2014*

Friday, September 12:

7 pm Board meeting, Curtis Cattle Company

Saturday, September 13:

All day – Golf at Arrowhead Meadows

11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. Lunch, location TBD
(RSVP for meal count, pay \$7 at the door)

1-3 p.m. Aggie Fest Judging Contest
(Come and compete at the LTC!!)

1-5 p.m. Campus Tours – Meet at Ed Center
(Guided tours start at 1, 2, 3 and 4 p.m.)

1-5 p.m. Reminisce in Alumni Room, Ag Hall
(NCTA Campus Bookstore open, Ag Hall)

4 p.m. Bench Branding – Bring your irons
(Livestock Teaching Center Arena)

6-7 p.m. - Social Hour, Community Center
Assemble friends for class photos!

7-9 p.m. – Prime rib dinner

- *Alumni awards, Business meeting*
- *Silent and live auctions to benefit*

NCTA Alumni Scholarship Fund

9 p.m. – Midnight – NU Football Tailgate!!
Watch the Huskers at Fresno State
(Students are invited for snacks, TV watch)

Sunday September 14:

8 - 10 a.m. – Breakfast – location TBD
(RSVP for meal count, pay \$7 at the door)

Golf available at Arrowhead Meadows

Please return this form and check (s) payable to:
UNL-NCTA Alumni Association
by Monday, August 25, 2014 to:

NSA/UNSA/UNSTA/NCTA Alumni Association
C/O Catherine Hauptman, secretary
404 East 7th St. Curtis, NE 69025
308-367-5222 or chauptman4@unl.edu

Name(s): _____

Department: _____

Graduation Year: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Email Address: _____

Annual Alumni Membership Dues:

(Alumni: annual dues unless have a lifetime membership)
_____ \$15/alumnus

Saturday September 13:

Lunch: *Pay at Door* _____ (RSVP, only)

Prime Rib Banquet
& Husker Tailgate: _____ \$40/person

Sunday September 14:

Breakfast: *Pay at Door* _____ (RSVP, only)

Total Enclosed: \$ _____

~Bring one item for the banquet silent auction~

Accommodations:

Hi Line Motel (308) 367-4340

Valley View Inn (308) 367-4580 – Inquire for
alumni rate in reserved block of rooms.

UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska
NCTA

Alumni willing to share their "legacy linkages" from NCTA are encouraged to send information to Mary Crawford, NCTA coordinator of external relations, at mcrawford@unl.edu or call 308-367-5231.

The University of Nebraska is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Institution.

President's Column

Share milestones, renew ties

What a year this has been! The NCTA schools crossed the 100 year milestone. Personally I crossed the 100 ewe milestone with a sheep flock where I mentor urban 4-H/FFA members. I also was awarded a "Friend of Agriculture" award by the Kansas Farm Bureau. What about each of you? What milestones have been achieved or received in your life this past year? Something in your family?...your business?...or your health?

What milestones might be ahead?

At NCTA this question is also being asked and formulated. I was fortunate to be included in the 5-Year Strategic Planning Committee meeting last fall. The final plan is printed and on the NCTA web site. Wow! What a set of goals to be challenged with. That leads me to ask, what will you as an alumnus or alumnae do that might assist NCTA to achieve those aspirations, one of which is student recruitment and retention?

As a high school agricultural instructor, I am in the position to bring in NCTA representatives to visit students. All alumni can work with their local guidance counselor to do the same and possibly be on hand during the visit. This does two things. It adds a local, personal support. It is also a way to find out about faculty, facility, and curricular changes.

One of the main requirements to adopting many of the goals within the strategic plan is funding. After sitting in

the NCTA booth for a couple of hours at the National FFA Career Show in Louisville, Ky., last fall, the most common question by prospective students was about financial aid. NCTA in recent years has benefitted greatly from the generosity and commitment of alumni and agricultural friends. But the need is ongoing.

Opportunities for direct contributions to various projects on campus still exist. There are bricks to buy for a courtyard. I add a hundred dollars every couple years to someday seeing my own glass block. Other means to assist also exist. Perhaps you, your business, or a group of area alumni might develop a local high school scholarship. Or you could do like Mike Connelly and Great Plains John Deere did, by supplying two John Deere tractors for the school to use at low-cost lease. There are many other departmental, campus, and instructional needs that could benefit from non-monetary support as well with donations to classrooms, supplies and equipment.

I invite you to attend the alumni banquet in September for first-hand information of what is happening. Better yet, renew your ties to that special milestone in your life...the time you spent at NSA, UNSTA, or NCTA. See you there!

Sincerely,
Dan Stehlik, UNSTA '75, UNL '86
NSA, UNSTA, and NCTA Alumni President