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RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System

May 2021

No. 5

Shirlye Hopkins uses lessons learned from Extension to create small business

Nutrition has always been a central part of Shirlye Hopkins' career — first as an EFNEP agent, then as a Family and Consumer Sciences agent, and now as a small business owner.

Hopkins shared nutrition information with many clients throughout her 38-year career with Extension. After retiring in 2014 from her job as Columbia County staff chair, Hopkins put her nutrition knowledge to use and opened her own catering business, In Good Taste.

Hopkins started her career in 1976 in Lafayette County, where she worked as the EFNEP agent for a year and a half.

"I worked a lot with nutrition, and I enjoyed creating recipes and working with people to teach them about a healthy diet," Hopkins said. "I trained families to stretch their budgets by using some of the recipes that Extension published."

"My second position was in Union County, and my areas of specialty were clothing and home furnishings," Hopkins said. "I really loved my time there because I have always like refinishing furniture and working with patterns while sewing. I had a lot of experience with that in college."

After nearly a decade there, Hopkins made the move to Columbia County. She continued working as an FCS agent until she became the staff chair of Columbia County.

"The national emphasis returned to nutrition, so I was the trainer for food preservation," Hopkins said. "I had the honor of being selected to travel to Alabama to become a certified food preserver, and I really enjoyed that."

Hopkins had a passion for Extension from the time she was a child thanks to a couple of inspirational ladies in her life.

"There was a lady in my community that formed a 4-H club for our small area," Hopkins said. "This was back before



Hopkins uses her nutrition skills to support her catering business, In Good Taste.

integration, and we lived 11 miles from town, so it was awesome for me to get to be part of that."

Her involvement in 4-H inspired her to help make that change for other children.

"I thought that she was just a smart lady, and I wanted to do what she had done for me," Hopkins said. "I decided at that time to become a county agent."

Another woman in Hopkins' life taught her that it is never too late to pursue your true calling.

"She went to college later in life to become a county extension agent, and I admired how knowledgeable she was," Hopkins said. "It sealed the deal for me as far as going to college to become a county agent myself."

Working for Extension, Hopkins was able to teach many people over the years. She loved being able to help people.

"I always liked being able to impart knowledge to help

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Hopkins, cont.

people,” Hopkins said. “I wanted to be known for finding answers, and that was one of the things I prided myself on.”

Hopkins retired in 2014 after a 38-year career with Extension, but she has not slowed down.

“I have a mission here in my local community that I picked up since I retired,” Hopkins said. “I drive people back and forth to their doctor appointments when they can’t do it themselves.”

She finds people in need through her church and word of mouth. Her mission is special to her, since it is something simple that she can do when others cannot do it for themselves.

“I don’t mind it, since I drive well and don’t have a fear of traveling outside of town,” Hopkins said.

Hopkins is active within her church, and she is excited to return to in-person services.

“Like most churches, we have been shut down due to the

pandemic. I am glad to be going back in person,” Hopkins said.

She also participates in a church book club to fill her time.

“Our meetings have been strictly on Zoom, but I have enjoyed reading books with others in my faith,” Hopkins said.

While the pandemic has halted some of her plans, she looks forward to the future with plenty of ways to make up for the past year of quarantine.

“I am part of a group of retirees, and we try to plan a trip every so often,” Hopkins said. “We love to visit different towns in Arkansas to site see or to do some shopping.”

Hopkins is using her nutrition skills to support her catering business. In Good Taste is a passion of hers that she pursues using the knowledge she gained while working at Extension. Not only did her time with Extension create memories and friendships that will last a lifetime, but she has skills that have enabled her to start a small business. ©

Arkansas pets, places inspire 4-H photographers

Garland County 4-H member Laney Hunter found inspiration for this year’s 4-H photography contest in her four-legged friend.

Her color photo of Daniel, a 1-year-old miniature Dachshund, won Best in Show in this year’s Ross Photography Contest, sponsored by Arkansas 4-H and the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture.

This year’s state winners, announced May 1, were selected from county winners from 42 participating counties. More than 400 photos were submitted at the county level, with the county winners advancing to the state competition. Photos depicted Arkansas scenes or subjects.

“Each year the competition gets better,” said Kerry Rodtnick, extension photographer and videographer for the Division of Agriculture, who coordinates the annual competition. “The judges had a hard time narrowing down the winners at the state level, and that’s a good sign. The 4-Hers are embracing the training they are getting from the agents at the county level.”

Hunter, 15, of Hot Springs, has been in 4-H for a decade and became interested in photography when she was 11.

“That is also the time I started entering my photos in the Garland County fair and Ross Photography contest,” she said. “My Nana (Annette Walters) is the one who encouraged me to pursue my passion in photography, and it is because of her that I am now a state winner.”

Hunter, who captured the winning photo with her iPhone, also won first place in the color photography of living things category.

The winners received cash prizes, funded by the Arkadelphia-based Ross Foundation. The late Jane Ross and her mother, Ester Clark Ross, established the foundation, which administers a philanthropic grants program and manages more than 60,000 acres of timberland, held for conservation purposes. Jane Ross served in the Women’s Army Corps in the Army Air Force as a photographic technician. She later operated a photography studio in Arkadelphia before she assumed the responsibilities of managing the family lands.



BEST IN SHOW — Laney Hunter, 15, of Hot Springs, won Best in Show in the Ross Photography Contest with this photo of her miniature Dachshund. (Image courtesy by Laney Hunter.)

To see a full collection of the winning photos, visit the [2021 4-H Ross Photography Contest Flickr Stream](#). ©

Summer gardening tips

Manage pests and diseases

As you enjoy your summer garden, remember to scout for signs of insects, diseases, and weeds. Diseases can spread quickly, so the earlier you identify a problem, the sooner you can get it under control. If you need help identifying problems, Extension has plenty of resources:

- [Plant Health Clinic Resources](#)
- Submit a photo and [Ask our Pest Crew](#).
- Take a plant sample or good pictures and get them to your local [county agents](#).

Watering trees

Plants and trees don't immediately show signs of drought, so it is important to water regularly before they show telltale signs of drought – such as wilt, leaf scorch, and loss of green coloration.

Your trees' water needs will depend on its species, soil type and soil internal drainage. For mature trees, water an inch or more once a week. Newly planted trees require watering twice a week during dry weather. For newly planted trees and shrubs, determine moisture needs by using your forefinger as a moisture meter.

Don't overwater. Symptoms of overwatering are the same as not watering often enough. For trees, it's better to water more in depth, less often and early in the morning. Nutrition gets leached out with frequent watering. One application of fertilizer per year—usually applied in the spring, should be sufficient.


Shrubs, plants, and turfgrass

Water plants before fertilizing and then water the fertilizer in. Frequent, light applications are best to avoid burning.

Turf needs about 1 inch of rainfall or irrigation water per week from May through September. Early morning watering is best for reducing disease buildup. Be sure the lawn is not wet going into the night.



Ornamental plant care tips

- Dig and divide irises. Irises do best in full sun but will tolerate some shade.
- If your summer annuals look like they are tired, fertilize them with half a pound (one cup) of 34-0-0 per 100 square feet. Watering is also important.
- If grass is invading flower beds, use a grass-specific herbicide such as Fusilade/Ornamec (fluazifop-P), Segment (sethoxydim) or Envoy (clethodim). In our trials fluazifop-P has been the most effective on bermudagrass. Always read and follow label directions or check with your county agent for specific advice.
- For all-summer blooming perennials and shrubs, deadhead the spent blooms to direct energy away from seed set and into more blooms. 

To our Extension retirees

It's a good time of the year to be a Master Gardener! I am less of a master when it comes to gardening and landscaping, but that did not stop my wife Susan and I from redoing a front flower bed at our house. This included removing the previous owner's unfortunate choice in gravel and plants, and completely redoing the bed with super soil, landscape fabric, mulch and a bunch of perennial plants! I love seeing these projects finished, but man, what a bunch of work! Anyway, it looks good now. My vegetable garden is another story, but my new "Ponca" blackberry plants, courtesy of [Dr. John Clark's breeding program](#), are looking good. I hope all of you have been able to get out and enjoy some good weather in between rains. Please share a picture with me if you have a spring yard or garden project you are proud of.




We are not quite back to normal here at the Little Rock State Office, but we are getting there. About half of our folks are back, and it is good to see everyone. I have traveled to several counties now, and it has been great to see real Extension work in person! Although our



county offices never really closed, we have had limited meetings and travel restrictions that have eased up when we moved into Stage III of our COVID management plan. I was lucky enough to attend the Crawford County Fun on the Farm event near Alma, where I got to see 4-Hers and other Extension personnel teach kindergartens and

first-graders about agriculture — how to pick strawberries correctly without damaging plants, how to milk a cow, where eggs (and chicken nuggets) come from, why bees are important, and more. It was great. I also attended one of our COVID vaccine events in Prairie County. Dr. Brian Mader in our Family and Consumer Sciences Department heads our vaccine educational outreach and efforts to make vaccines available to hard-to-reach populations in rural areas. It's good work.

I look forward to upcoming meetings with you as we settle into our new normal at the Cooperative Extension Service. Until then, you can reach out to me at bscott@uada.edu. 

June Birthdays

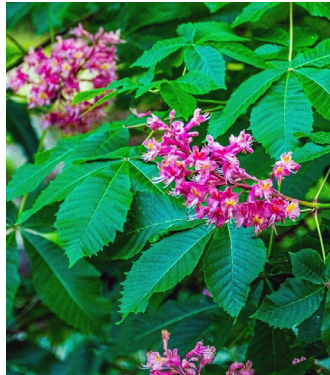
Mae Rosby - June 1
Ford Baldwin - June 1
Robin Bridges - June 2
Linda Hon - June 3
Jesse Clark - June 4
Mike McCarter - June 5
Jelyne Hubbard Coldwell - June 6
Brenda Vick - June 7
Vetress Strong - June 8
Lanny Ashlock - June 8
Rex Roberg - June 9

Jo Howard - June 10
Graffie Eldridge - June 11
Martha May - June 11
Tamara Walkingstick - June 13
Mike Hamilton - June 14
Janet Kuykendall - June 16
Sue Oglesby - June 16
Sharon Dawson - June 17
Lila Grist - June 20
Bonnie Taylor - June 20
Rin Robertson - June 20

Dennis Bailey - June 21
Rick Cartwright - June 21
Sherry Black - June 23
Clifford Coker - June 24
Carroll Garner - June 25
Linda Outlaw - June 25
Romona Duncan Thieme - June 25
Allen Bates - June 25
Iris Phifer - June 27
Pam Ferrill - June 27
Dorothy Hall - June 29

Garvan Woodland Gardens offers summertime health and fitness activities

In addition to enjoying the continued unfurling of spring blooms at Garvan Woodland Gardens, visitors can take part in a range of health and fitness activities in May and June.



"Group Health Walks"

will be held from 10:15-11:15 a.m. each Monday through June. Sharon Turrentine and friends will lead a three-mile walk, rain or shine. Participants should meet on the Welcome Center deck, and pets and strollers are welcome.

The Tai Chi Series "Strength in Motion" will meet from 1:30-2:30 p.m. each Thursday through June. The Oaklawn Center on Aging leads this ancient, low-impact practice that increases flexibility, balance and strength. Loose, comfortable clothing and comfortable footwear are recommended. Classes will meet on the Great Lawn.

"Walk and Learn!" tours guided by Garvan Gardens docents will be held from 10:30 a.m. to noon May 26 and June 16 and 30. The hikes will help participants gain familiarity with the garden and stay updated on the current and recent construction projects within the garden. Participants should meet on the deck of the Welcome Center.

For more information, visit the [Garvan Gardens website](#). 

Scholarship donations

The following gifts were recently received to support professional development opportunities for faculty and staff of the Cooperative Extension Service.

Extension Service Retiree Scholarship Fund


Betty Jean Brannan

Jelyne Coldwell

George Davis

Martha May

Brenda Vick

Honorary or memorial donations should be forwarded to the Development Office, ATTN: Brian Helms, Cooperative Extension Service, 2301 South University Ave., Little Rock, AR 72204. If joint recognition is desired, please indicate. To ensure 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. 

Welcome new retirees!

Gay Flaherty, Pike County

Gay began her career with the Pike County office in August 2010 and she retired on April 30, 2021. She was the administrative support supervisor in the Pike County office and retired with 10 years of service.

Bruce Knox, Information Technology – LRSO

Bruce began his career with the Information Technology Department in October 1997 and retired on April 30, 2021. He was a senior database programmer analyst at retirement. Bruce retired with 23 years of service. 