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Going, Gardening and Grandchildren Are on Walker's Agenda

Retiree Spotlight

*Danny Walker
Leon Duncan*

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Danny Walker has been a lot of things in his life: Extension staff chair, Master Gardener and grandfather.

What you may not know is that Walker served a short stint as a skunk specialist.

It all started with a spot on his local radio show, where he read a prepackaged script about the striped nocturnal critters. Walker confesses he actually didn't know that much about them but thought it looked like an interesting topic to read about on the air.

He quickly learned a lot more about skunks than he ever intended, because the phone calls started coming in and he had to offer answers. Walker's secretary took a call one day from a lady who had mistaken a skunk for her cat – and held the door open for it while it walked right into her house. After the lady realized her mistake, she called the police, who scared the skunk.

“You know what happened next, right?” Walker said. Yep, the skunk suddenly sprayed everywhere. So the lady was calling Walker for some advice on how to get rid of the smell.

The whole time Walker talked to the lady on the phone, his secretary stood in the doorway saying, “Here kitty, kitty, kitty.”

Needless to say, he had a hard time keeping it together on the phone while the lady shared about her skunk problem.



Cindy and Danny Walker

Walker has more recently cruised Alaska, become an official Master Gardener and a grandfather (again) and has taken a part-time job in the two years he's been retired from Extension.

Walker works in Magnolia for the Columbia County road department and uses the software arcGIS, which maps culverts, bridges and other landmarks.

He has three granddaughters – the third was born just recently.

Walker is active in the Lions Club and teaches at his church on occasion.

Walker and his wife, Cindy, are both Master Gardeners. He taught Master Gardener classes for many years and was grandfathered in after retirement. They both enjoy planting and tending their own vegetables and flowers.

Walker occasionally pokes his head into the Extension office where he served as Columbia County staff chair.

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Perilous First Assignment Gave Leon Duncan a Taste of Extension Work

Leon Duncan still remembers his first week as an Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service employee in vivid detail.

He had just graduated from Oklahoma State University and, many resumes and several interviews later, had finally landed a job as assistant county agent agriculture - 4-H in Pocahontas. The staff chair at the time told Duncan that while he was away from the office that week, Duncan should take the time to get to know the county.

And boy, did the staff chair make sure his new recruit got to “know” the county – by lining up a long list of farmers to take Duncan out to their farms and experience Delta luxuries like mosquitoes, snakes and wading through rice paddies – without the benefit of waders. He “toured” about three or four farms a day, per the staff chair’s devious planning.

“I didn’t know anything about row crops,” he recalled. “I was a hillbilly.”

By the end of the week, he knew more about Pocahontas than a year might have taught him otherwise. It wasn’t until the week came to an end that he clued in on the fact that he’d been set up.

“They teased me for years about that,” he said with a laugh. “I look back on it and I appreciate it greatly.”

After about three years, Duncan took an apprenticeship in



Leon Duncan

the poultry department at the University of Arkansas and started working on his master’s degree. He finished his degree while working as an ag extension agent in Arkadelphia. By then, he was married.

In 1985, Duncan got the opportunity to go back to “the hills” as staff chair in Sharp County. He was there for five years and then made a lateral move to Carroll County, where he stayed until retiring from Extension in January 2011. He and his wife still live in Berryville.

Duncan also still works with lots of 4-H students on their animal projects, though in a volunteer capacity. He thought he might get a job somewhere after retirement, but between helping out kids in 4-H and other pursuits – while also recovering from a four-wheeler accident – that hasn’t been a priority. He also has cattle and takes care of his old home place back in Oklahoma where he was raised.

What does Duncan do for fun? “I fish, but only on weekdays and weekends,” he jokes. “I only hunt when I’m not fishing.”

His wife of 33 years, Debbie, likes to fish with him.

“We’re enjoying ourselves,” Duncan said. “It doesn’t pay much, but I guess you’d say it’s fulfilling.”

The Duncans have two children.

To reconnect with Leon Duncan, contact him at (870) 423-6023, 94 County Road 430, Berryville, Arkansas 72616-4792.

– Shannon Magsam

Danny Walker (Cont. from p. 1)

Walker worked for Extension for 32 years. He started out in 1980 in Hempstead County working as an assistant county agent in agriculture and 4-H. After two years, he moved to White County, where he served three years as an assistant county agent for agriculture. Next, he moved to Fulton County as an agriculture agent and was promoted to staff chair while he was there.

In 1995, Walker made the move to Columbia County, where he served as staff chair until retiring in January 2012.

To reconnect with Danny Walker, contact him at (870) 234-8219, 72 Sassafras Drive, Magnolia, Arkansas 71753.

– Shannon Magsam

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 memorial gifts deposited April 1-30, 2014.

■ Cooperative Extension Service Retiree Scholarship

George Davis

In honor of Kay Dickens

Lanny Ashlock

In honor of Woody Miley

William Woodall

In honor of Helen Nowlin and Brenda Henderson Pratt

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In memory of Arvell Wyatt and Percell Ryan

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Jimmie Bowling

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

– Elizabeth Childs

From the Editorial Board

Extension Celebrates 100-Year Anniversary

On May 8, 1914, President Woodrow Wilson signed the Smith-Lever Act, thus enacting, in his words, “one of the most significant and far-reaching measures for the education of adults ever adopted by the government.” The law created a national agricultural extension service – an action that would help transform farming in America and rural Arkansas.



Over the decades, Extension in Arkansas has helped introduce mechanization, aided in making statewide childhood immunizations reality, and back in the 1930s, we even helped persuade our neighbors that electricity was a good thing. 4-H grew out of our mission to pass on innovations to farm families by teaching youth new ways of growing.

For a hundred years, the agents and staff of University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service have worked to bring the best of university research to help resolve the problems facing us. You have had a big part in delivering that message. While our methods may have changed over the years, our core mission remains the same – to continue helping our neighbors improve how they live for this generation and the ones to come.

You can check out some vintage photos of the work done by Arkansas Extension at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/uacescomm/sets/72157635470442004/>.

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The devastating F4 tornado and heavy rains of April 27 affecting counties across Arkansas have got us all thinking about safety procedures in the event of a tornado warning. Extension has a short information sheet at the following link that summarizes what you need to know to help prepare for tornado season in Arkansas:

http://www.uaex.edu/environment-nature/disaster/docs/BeAware_Tornadoes.pdf

Your editorial board

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Birthdays

Ford Baldwin, June 1
Mae Rosby, June 1
Linda Hon, June 3
Jelyne Coldwell, June 6
Brenda Vick, June 7
Lanny Ashlock, June 8

Vetress Strong, June 8
Jo Howard, June 10
Joe Bradley, June 11
Martha May, June 11
Michael Hamilton, June 14
Janet Kuykendall, June 16

Lila Grist, June 20
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Yes, I want to support the *Advance 25K: Continuing a Legacy* fundraising initiative in support of the Cooperative Extension Service Retiree Scholarship.

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