

Aug. 4, 2017

By Mary Crawford, NCTA News

Aggie Alumni salute award honorees

CURTIS, Neb. – What do welding, horse stalls, leadership, dedication, a farm, college campus, livestock and industry service have in common with Curtis, Nebraska?

Students and Nebraska agriculture are common denominators at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture (NCTA) and its predecessor institution the University of Nebraska School of Technical Agriculture (UNSTA), says its UNSTA/NCTA Aggie Alumni Association.

“Our college students are very successful in their careers in Nebraska and across the nation due to amazing support from businesses, individuals, local residents and dedicated faculty and staff at Curtis, Nebraska,” says Kim Bowers Mortensen of Curtis, ‘83 Veterinary Technology graduate and outgoing alumni association president.

The Aggie Alumni Association also represents the Nebraska School of Agriculture (NSA) and University of Nebraska School of Agriculture (UNSA), the two eras of high school programs on the Curtis campus from 1913-1967.

Aggies alumni and friends met June 24 in Broken Bow for an annual meeting and awards banquet. The awards committee, chaired by Past President Dan Stehlik, Aggie alumnus and NCTA agricultural mechanics instructor, awarded five Aggie Alumni awards.

UNSTA/NCTA Alumni Awards

The Alumni Service Award was presented to the Mervin R. Eighmy Foundation for equipping the welding laboratory with eight new welders. Former Nebraska State Sen. Jim Jones of Eddyville serves on the Eighmy board and accepted the award on behalf of UNSTA Alumnus Jim Stewart of Lincoln and the Eighmy board.

Barbara Berg of Curtis received the Alumni Achievement Award for her professional accomplishments which include serving as chair of the NCTA Veterinary Technology department. She is a 1973 UNSTA graduate in veterinary technology, is a Licensed Veterinary Technician (LVT) and is a past president of the Aggie Alumni Association.

NCTA Animal Science Professor Jo Bek of Curtis was a recipient of the Aggie Legacy/Distinguished Service Award. The award was presented by her daughter Paige Bek Wood of St. Paul, and Aggie Alumni President Mortensen. Bek has been a faculty member for 39 years.

Alumna Andrea Burkhart of Winnetoon was the 2017 recipient of the new Alumni *Leave Your Mark Award* because of her outstanding efforts on campus as a student worker in the horticulture program. The 2017 graduate was unable to attend the banquet. She is attending further studies this summer at the Floral Design Institute in Portland, Oregon.

Judy and Bill Nutt of Curtis were awarded Honorary Life Membership to the Aggie Alumni Association as a result of their 46-year history of boarding horses, dogs and other livestock for college students. They were not able to attend the banquet and will be honored in a Curtis event later this year.

Awards also were presented to two longtime supporters of the college – Andi Knepp of North Platte, retired as the UNSTA/NCTA farm manager, and Dave Smith of Rapid City, S.D., retired animal science professor and division chair. Smith continues to serve as an adjunct instructor and teaches online courses. Both Knepp and Smith accepted a customized NCTA belt buckle as a gift from their former animal science colleague, Teri Jo Bek, in recognizing their significant positive impact each made for students and the UNSTA/NCTA institution.

The Aggie Alumni Association will meet next on June 16, 2018 in Curtis at the NCTA campus and community.

For details, contact Catherine Potter Hauptman, Aggie Alumni Association secretary, in the NCTA Dean's Office at 308 367-5200, 1-800-3CURTIS or chauptman4@unl.edu.

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Article at: <http://go.unl.edu/hw65>



NCTA Veterinary Technology Division Chair Barbara Berg, Curtis, receives the Alumni Achievement Award from Kim Mortensen, Aggie Alumni Association president. (Crawford/NCTA News photo)



Jim Jones, Eddyville, views a new welder at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture. The Mervin R. Eighthy Foundation received the Alumni Service Award for support to NCTA students. (Crawford/NCTA News photo)



Teri Jo Bek of Curtis (center) was presented the Legacy/Distinguished Service Award by her daughter, Paige Bek Wood of St. Paul, and Aggie Alumni Association President Kim Bowers Mortensen, Curtis. (Crawford/NCTA News)



Andi Knepp, North Platte (left), and Dave Smith, Rapid City, S.D., were presented with commemorative NCTA belt buckles from their former colleague Teri Jo Bek, NCTA faculty member. (Crawford/NCTA News)

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Sources:

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NCTA.Alumni.Awards.08.04.17