



NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL AGRICULTURE

NCTA NEWS

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By NCTA Dean Ron Rosati, Ph.D.

Welcome Aggie alumni

The institution that is now NCTA started in 1913 as a residential high school for boys and girls. Our early faculty welcomed young men studying agriculture, and young women, in "normal training" as teachers and in home economics.

They were part of land grant institutions across the United States which first established high schools, then evolved into fulltime college campuses.

This week marks a festive occasion for the last class of senior students who graduated from that original high school in Curtis.

For 55 years, the campus educated and housed students from the ninth through 12th grades. They were the Curtis Aggies, students who hailed from Frontier County, throughout southwestern Nebraska and from the far reaches of the Sandhills, northwestern Nebraska and occasionally out of state.

The University of Nebraska School of Agriculture (UNSA) Class of '68 is observing its 50th class reunion this weekend at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture in Curtis.

Four organizers have been planning for two years to return to their alma mater, says Mary Alice Coyle Corman of Edgar, Nebraska. Mary Alice, Lorne Wilson of Lincoln, Mick Glaze of Oberlin, Kansas, and Diane Nelsen Pollmann of McCook will welcome classmates from several states including Alaska, Texas, Missouri and Nevada.

It will be a return to roots for many. Mary Alice was a native of rural McCook, growing up on the farm of her parents Alice Jewell and Francis John Coyle, located about 18 miles south of Curtis.

Like her parents, who also grew up in southwest Nebraska and met during high school at Curtis, Mary Alice and her siblings would have to travel poor roads and long distances to get to school. So, she was enrolled at UNSA and studied all four years here.

This week she shared the deep connection her family has with the Curtis campus.

"Both of my parents graduated from then-NSA (Nebraska School of Agriculture) and like them I stayed in the dorm. My father appreciated the skills in butchering taught to him at NSA. He often butchered and processed our own and neighbors' meats. Mother was able to teach after her "normal training" at NSA, though at 5 ft.2 in. she felt dwarfed by her older students.

"Our class was sad to be the end of an era of educational history. We saw the concern in the underclassmen as they faced the future with nothing certain as to their place of education, then the elation as a school bond was finally passed. It was an emotional time with the Vietnam War and population pressures on colleges promoting negative attitudes toward students. I was amazed by the attitude change in campus staff when my own children entered college in contrast to '68."

Mary Alice shares many memories. Girls wore dresses, not slacks, and they did not have sports. Boys competed in football and basketball. Student clubs sponsored dances and social activities, much like the college clubs do today. The Aggies also hosted a Jr. Ak-Sar-Ben, and girls could show the livestock provided by the boys. Immense school pride existed, as is evidenced by the 1968 yearbook.

The bond issue to build the new Medicine Valley High School was finally passed, and the seniors resolved to make their 1967-68 school year at the “campus on the hill” a final, successful one.

That, they did. Alongside college-aged freshmen and sophomores, who in 1965 and 1966, has begun their collegiate careers at the University of Nebraska’s new technical agriculture college.

The 55-year traditions as the Curtis Aggies, from 1913-1968, had evolved. Some graduates attended college.

Mary Alice went on to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and studied home economics and consumer sciences, and met her spouse, Richard Corman, who was a graduate student. Her career in teaching and as an extension educator in Nebraska Extension got its roots in Curtis.

Organizers hope to see many classmates and friends from around the area. They look forward to a Saturday noon lunch at the campus cafeteria, in the same dormitory basement where they always dined. (Sometimes, breakfast attire of the boys was evident they came straight from milking cows, feeding chickens or livestock, some of the many chores on campus).

A catered, evening banquet will be at the Curtis Community Center, with friends and guests encouraged to join them at 8 p.m.

I look forward to welcoming the UNSA Class of 1968 on Saturday at 10 a.m. for campus tours and reminiscing. Welcome back home, Curtis Aggies. Have a terrific weekend!

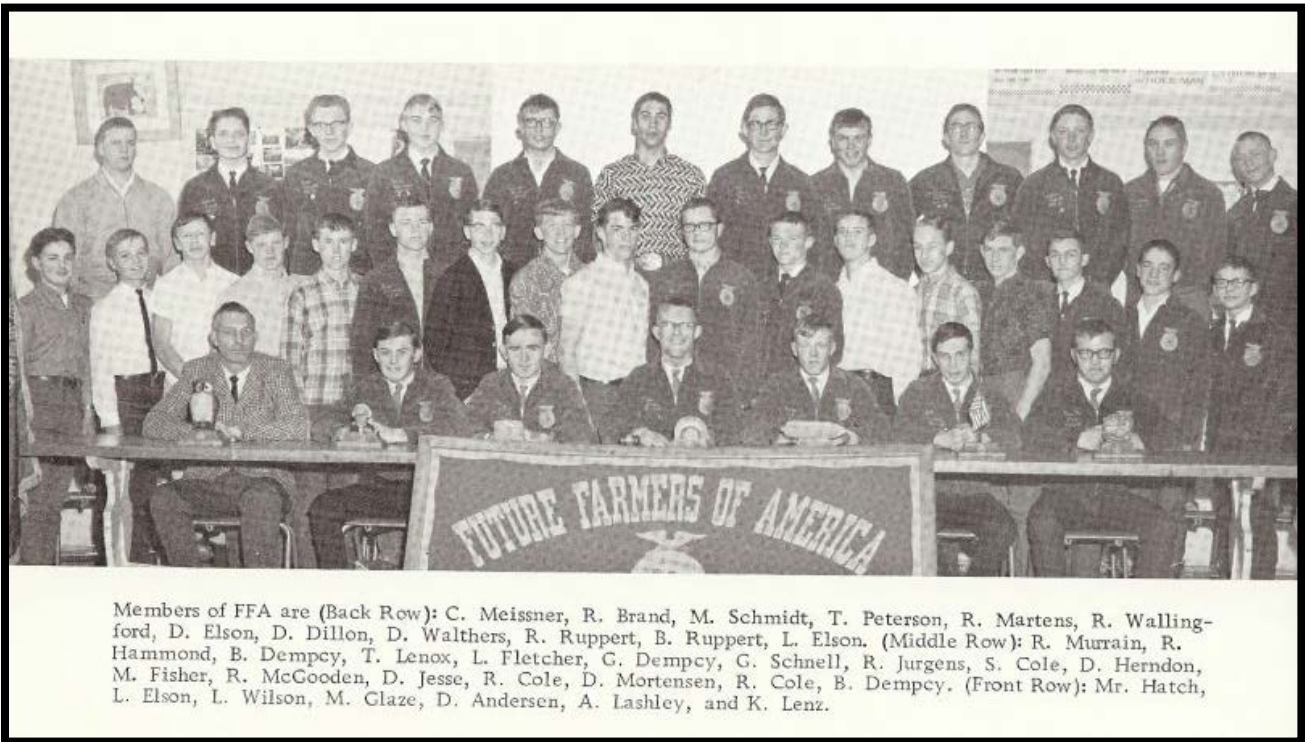
Upcoming Events:

- Sept. 20 – Nebraska Cattlemen’s Cow Calf Field Day, 10 a.m., Ed Center
- Sept. 22 – UNSA Class of ’68 Reunion, Curtis
- Sept. 25 – North Platte 8th Grade to NCTA
- Sept. 27 – “Say What?” seminar, Education Center
- Sept. 28-29 – Aggie Shooting Sports Team, Prairie States Circuit match, North Platte
- Sept. 28-29 – Aggie Rodeo Team to Fort Dodge, Iowa
- Sept. 29 – Mobile Public Food Pantry, NCTA Student Union (hours TBD)
- Sept. 29-30 – NCTA Stock Dog and Outback Stock Dog Association trials, LTC indoor arena
- Sept. 29-30 – NCTA Livestock Judging Team to Ak-Sar-Ben, Grand Island
- Sept. 30 – Nebraska LEAD seminar, NCTA Campus

NCTA Mission: *The Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture is devoted to a statewide mission of preparing students for successful careers in agriculture, veterinary technology, food and related industries. The college provides open access to innovative technical education resulting in associate degrees, certificates, diplomas and other credentials.*

University of Nebraska School of Agriculture (UNSA) – Two photos attached from the UNSA Aggies High School Yearbook of 1968.

Future Farmers of America, UNSA 1968



Members of FFA are (Back Row): C. Meissner, R. Brand, M. Schmidt, T. Peterson, R. Martens, R. Wallingford, D. Elson, D. Dillon, D. Walthers, R. Ruppert, B. Ruppert, L. Elson. (Middle Row): R. Murrain, R. Hammond, B. Dempcy, T. Lenox, L. Fletcher, G. Dempcy, G. Schnell, R. Jurgens, S. Cole, D. Herndon, M. Fisher, R. McGooden, D. Jesse, R. Cole, D. Mortensen, R. Cole, B. Dempcy. (Front Row): Mr. Hatch, L. Elson, L. Wilson, M. Glaze, D. Andersen, A. Lashley, and K. Lenz.

Future Homemakers of America, UNSA 1968



The members of FHA are; FRONT ROW: D. Jorgensen, J. Leitritz, J. Johnston, R. Gosnell, M. Coyle, D. Andersen, J. Thompson, C. Schnell, A. Votaw, M. West, C. Schick, J. Appleyard. SECOND ROW: T. Hanna, S. Farrar, J. Magner, L. Vreeland, L. Hanes, D. Hanes, J. Engbrecht, M. Bortner, E. Turner, S. Russell, Miss Clark. THIRD ROW: D. Magee, S. Brush, E. Nelsen, J. Werkmeister, J. Ewald, B. Nelson, M. Nelson, A. Welch, B. Fisher, and E. Halley.