

June 26, 2017

Dean's Column by Ron Rosati, PhD

NCTA celebrates Aggie Alumni

The Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture held its 2017 Alumni Association meeting in Broken Bow, Nebraska on Saturday, June 24. The event was a great success with more than 90 attendees reminiscing, sharing experiences, honoring alumni accomplishments, hearing about new developments at their alma mater and generally having a great time.

The Aggie Alumni Association, which represents high school years from 1913-1967, and five decades of the college starting in 1965 with the University of Nebraska School of Technical Agriculture (UNSTA), rotates the banquet location so that it's held in Curtis one year and in other Nebraska communities alternate years.

Larry Trumbull, a native of Tryon who now lives in North Platte, graduated from the regional high school in 1947. He was the oldest alumnus in attendance.

The emcee this year was RP Smith, an UNSTA alumnus of '80 in production agriculture, rancher and cowboy poet. RP was the evening's entertainment, sharing many outstanding, creative stories about ranching and life in rural Nebraska. His oral tales about the livestock and people of our region resonated well with Aggie alumni.

For college staff attending the event, the evening was a casual opportunity to hear from alumni and to see results of college endeavors from previous years. Faculty and staff work hard to create graduates who will be successful and productive citizens. Unfortunately, we don't always get to see or hear about the results of these efforts which may take years to bear fruit. It's very rewarding for faculty and staff to see such prosperous alumni at these annual meetings.

Alumni heard about NCTA's very successful 2017 graduation, our new college buckle tradition, and the 2017 NCTA student awards ceremony. I shared details about the wonderful administrative support NCTA receives from leaders in Lincoln including President Hank Bounds, Vice President Mike Boehm and Chancellor Ronnie Green.

Attendees were very pleased to hear about NCTA's recent ranking by Forbes magazine as one of the top 30 two year trade schools in the United States. Our University of Nebraska institution was the only agriculture college making the list which ranked schools based on graduate earnings, college affordability and academic quality. Alumni also heard about the 2017 national academic competition in which NCTA had an overall ranking as number two among all two-year colleges competing.

Alumni have been supporting the many upgrades to NCTA's physical plant, and heard updates about campus developments that have occurred in the past year, including new welders in the welding lab, a new air-conditioning system in the Student Activity Center, upgraded cafeteria equipment in the dining hall, a new veterinary technology aviary, new kennels for the stock dog club, a first-time recycling initiative and new recycling containers in all buildings, and expanded Internet infrastructure throughout campus.

Alumni are enthusiastic about the many successes of our student clubs and teams, groups which are an important part of the academic and social environment at NCTA. These enrichment activities share a significant role in the overall success of our students.

The Aggie Alumni honored groups and individuals who have supported the college or achieved distinction for their efforts in Nebraska agriculture. An Alumni Service Award was presented to the Mervin Eighmy Foundation for its very generous contribution which was used to upgrade our welding laboratory with eight new welders. Sen. Jim Jones of Eddyville serves on the Eighmy board and accepted the award.

Alumna Andrea Burkhart of Winnetoon was the 2017 recipient of the new *Leave Your Mark Award* because of her outstanding efforts on campus as a student worker in the horticulture program. Andrea spearheaded vast improvements to campus aesthetics, especially grounds and landscaping.

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.

Barbara Berg of Curtis received the Alumni Achievement Award for her professional accomplishments which include currently serving as chair of the NCTA Veterinary Technology department. NCTA Animal Science Professor Jo Bek of Curtis was a recipient of the Legacy/Distinguished Service Award.

Special awards were given by Bek to two former colleagues - Andi Knepp and Dave Smith. Each was able to attend and accept a customized NCTA belt buckle recognizing their significant positive impact for students and the college.

Alumni reminisced and visited long after the formal program ended. The last alumni finally headed home in the very early hours of Sunday morning after reliving the events (and perhaps the social schedule) of their college years. It was a wonderful evening to celebrate our Aggie alumni.

For additional overview of our NCTA programs, visit ncta.unl.edu or give us a call at 1-800-3 CURTIS.

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.



NCTA Dean Ron Rosati provided a "Campus Update" to nearly 90 Aggie alumni and friends in Broken Bow. Larry Trumbull (left, foreground) graduated in 1947. (Crawford/NCTA Photo)