



NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL AGRICULTURE

NCTA NEWS
404 East 7th Street
Curtis, NE 69025-9525
Mary Crawford: 308-367-5231
mcrawford@unl.edu

June 17, 2019

By Mary Crawford, NCTA News

Hansens tap NCTA ag mechanics with gift

CURTIS, Neb. - Alumnus Gary W. Hansen had a positive experience at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture in Curtis while attending there in the mid-1970s.

As a result, his family is making certain future generations of students have the same opportunities for success in agriculture.

Improvements underway at the college are made possible with a significant memorial gift from Gary Hansen's family which they made to the University of Nebraska Foundation.

The Hansen family, including Gary Hansen's father, Claire Hansen, and brother, alumnus Byron Hansen, chose to make the gift in memory of Gary after learning about the college's plans to increase student opportunities while preparing even more skilled graduates for Nebraska's workforce.

The family's gift has funded the first phase of needed updates and redevelopment of a key classroom and the welding shop building, which is now better equipped for technical training resources.

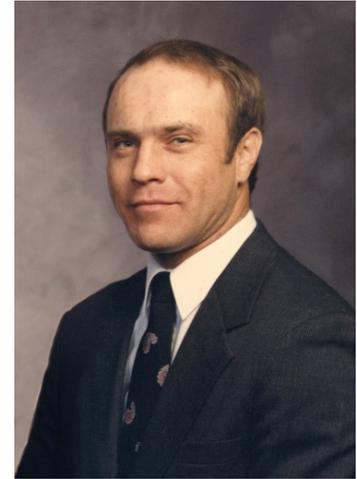
The multi-level shop building, which has a stairway on the south side, will soon be made accessible when a wheelchair ramp on the east side of the building is completed. Interior upgrades have added more welding stalls and equipment in the lab, plus more electrical outlets and power supply.

The redeveloped classroom was modernized with all new desks, furniture, internet access, paint, storage units and wider doorway.

The Hansens also made a commitment to fund a phase two project with more improvements planned. In the next year or two, NCTA will add handicap parking on the east side of the welding shop along with a sculpted pavilion, additional sidewalks and esthetic exterior enhancements.

"Throughout his life, Gary considered the training he received at UNSTA as perhaps the most beneficial technical instruction of his lifetime," said Byron Hanson, Gary's brother and a longtime agricultural lender in Kearney.

"Because of Gary's experience at UNSTA-NCTA, it is appropriate to honor his college experience by seeking to ensure that the experience of NCTA students, both today and in the future, is as beneficial as was his."



Gary W. Hansen, UNSTA '76

In October 1974, at the age of 18, Gary Hansen began his tenure as a student at the University of Nebraska School of Technical Agriculture. Studying agricultural mechanics was a natural pursuit for him, because he was raised around the family business, Hansen Implement Co., based in the far northeastern community of Coleridge, Nebraska.

Gary graduated in May 1976 with an associate degree in agricultural mechanics.

Gary's brother, Byron Hansen, graduated there in 1978 and says there is little doubt that Gary regarded his time at UNSTA as among the most enjoyable years of his life.

In making the gift, Byron Hansen said the Gary W. Hansen memorial project "is in appreciation of the gift of knowledge received from educators at NCTA and, notably, the dedication of Jim Cerny, Wayne Stuckenhotz and Bill Witt."

"Gary graduated as an honor student as a result of his academic success coupled with recognition by faculty as demonstrating the behavior and characteristics possessed by exceptional citizens," Hansen said.

The Aggie Alumni Association will honor Gary W. Hansen posthumously at its banquet June 22, 2019, in Broken Bow with the 2019 Alumni Service Award. Gary died in 2006 at the age of 49 in Illinois.

After graduation in 1976, Gary returned to Coleridge and worked in the family business, managing its service division.

He returned to a classroom and laboratory, however, this time as a Husker at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He received a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering in 1987.

Gary then moved to Illinois, joining Caterpillar, Inc., and was there nearly 20 years until his death in 2006.

Twelve years following Gary's death, Byron and his father, Claire, returned to the place Gary loved in Curtis. In December 2018, they toured the agricultural mechanics program and saw first-hand how they could help through a memorial project.

Claire passed away earlier this year, knowing the family's gift would aid future NCTA graduates.

The father-son duo were impressed by what they saw and heard during their December visit, particularly the college's plan for increasing student opportunities and workforce development, said Pete Kotsiopoulos, senior director of development with the University of Nebraska Foundation.

He coordinated the gift and communication with NCTA Dean Ron Rosati.

The Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture is part of the University of Nebraska system. It prepares students for careers in agriculture, veterinary technology, agribusiness and food.



NCTA Associate Dean Jennifer McConville, Claire and Byron Hansen, and Dean Ron Rosati met at NCTA, December, 2018.