



NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL AGRICULTURE

April 8, 2019

NCTA alumna to be graduation speaker

By NCTA News

CURTIS, Neb. – An agricultural graduate and family farmer from Dodge, Nebraska, will deliver the 2019 commencement address at the University of Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture in Curtis.

Joan (Wieczorek) Ruskamp, a 1980 alumna, will join University of Nebraska leaders in delivering messages at the 1:30 p.m. commencement on Thursday, May 2, announced Ron Rosati, NCTA dean.

“We are honored to welcome back to Curtis Joan and Steve Ruskamp, who are both graduates of this institution, for our 2019 NCTA Aggie graduation activities,” Rosati said.

“As Joan is not only a graduate but an agricultural advocate, active ag producer, grandmother and community leader, I am sure Joan’s message will resonate with our NCTA Aggie students and their families,” Rosati added.

University of Nebraska Vice President Mike Boehm will confer degrees. He will be joined by two members of the University of Nebraska Board of Regents and other dignitaries. Regent Bob Phares of North Platte and Regent Barbara Weitz of Omaha will deliver remarks.

Rosati said the Class of 2019 will include students receiving associate degrees or certificates from four divisions – Agribusiness Management Systems, Agronomy and Agricultural Mechanics, Animal Science and Agricultural Education, or Veterinary Technology.

Students are currently finalizing semester projects and internships in the next two weeks, and will be taking final exams April 24 -April 30, Rosati said.

Joan and Steve Ruskamp studied in the two-year college’s most popular academic areas, currently as well, as in the late 1970s when the institution was known as the University of Nebraska School of Technical Agriculture (UNSTA).

Joan earned her associate degree in veterinary technology in May, 1980, and Steve in agriculture production in 1976. They married in 1981 and began their farming career and family at a location west of Dodge which has been in the Ruskamp family for more than a century.

There, they have raised five children while growing corn, soybeans and alfalfa along with finishing cattle in a 4,000-head feedlot. Joan applies her college skills in animal health and management in the family’s

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Curtis, NE 69025-9525

Mary Crawford: 308-367-5231

mcrawford@unl.edu



Joan Ruskamp

operation. Her primary jobs are walking pens of cattle, doctoring and processing the feedlot cattle, and serving as office manager.

Many will know Ruskamp from her agricultural literacy and advocacy in Common Ground Nebraska and as past president of the Cattlemen's Beef Board (CBB), for the national beef checkoff. She serves her community as a volunteer 4-H leader and EMT (Emergency Medical Technician).

Ruskamp also has been active in the beef industry serving in the Dodge County Cattlemen, Nebraska Cattlemen, National Cattlemen's Beef Association, American National CattleWomen, Nebraska Farm Bureau and Nebraska Soybean Association.

In addition to five children, the Ruskamps have three sons-in-law, a daughter-in-law and six grandchildren.

"Joan Ruskamp serves as an outstanding model for our NCTA graduates." Rosati said. "Her outstanding career demonstrates the success that is possible by combining an NCTA degree with a strong work ethic, intelligence and integrity."

On May 1, students will be recognized in special Aggie honors and graduation events beginning with an initiation of new members into Phi Theta Kappa academic honorary for two-year colleges at 1 p.m., a community picnic at 5:30 p.m., awards night at 7 p.m., followed by NCTA belt buckle presentations.

Doors to the NCTA graduation will open at 1 p.m. at the Curtis Memorial Community Center, located at 301 Garlick Avenue. All are invited to attend however, there will not be reserved seating for families and guests.

Additional information about the NCTA graduation events can be found at the NCTA web site at ncta.unl.edu or by contacting the Dean's Office at 308-367-5200.

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