

# Arkansas Agriculture Hall of Fame: Class XXXIV



## **Rick Cartwright, Fayetteville**

Rick Cartwright grew up on a farm in Stone County, where he was a member of 4-H. He went on to earn bachelor's and master's degrees at the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville and a Ph.D. in plant pathology from the University of California at Davis.

Cartwright joined the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture in 1992, earning international recognition as a rice pathologist and serving in various leadership posts. Cartwright also served as interim head of the plant pathology department, and more recently has been associate director-Agriculture and Natural Resources before being named interim director of extension in 2016 and senior associate vice president for agriculture-extension for the UA Division of Agriculture in 2017. He retired June 30, 2020.

He also spent six years (1978-84) as assistant vice president of the Farm Supply Division for Southern Farmers Association before moving to California to pursue graduate work.

Dr. Cartwright developed the scouting method and disease thresholds for Rice Sheath Blight and Rice Blast. He worked with infra-red aerial photography to determine specific areas of rice fields infested with diseases. This concept of precision application saved countless trips across the field, helped increase farmer profitability and reduced disease resistance. His research extended to other crops as well.

The list of awards Dr. Cartwright has earned is lengthy. He was awarded the Meritorious Service Award from the Arkansas Wheat Promotion Board in 1996, a National Certificate of Appreciation from USDA/APHIS in 1997 and a Special Service Commendation from the Arkansas State Plant Board in 1997. Cartwright was presented the John White Outstanding Extension State Education Award in 2000 and received the National Distinguished Rice Research and Education Award in 2004 from the Rice Technical Working Group. The Southern Division of the American Phytopathological Society named him the Outstanding Plant Pathologist in 2007 and he received the 2011 National Rice Industry Award by USA Rice.

Dr. Cartwright was on the development team when the Rice Research and Promotion Board determined that the Northeast Arkansas Rice Experiment Station was critically important.

Dr. Cartwright built a long legacy of research and education that have been his life's work. He was an inspiration, a voice of reason and a staunch advocate for the role of Extension work in improving Arkansas agriculture.



## **Joe Don Greenwood, Hermitage**

Joe Don Greenwood has been a driving force in agriculture education in Arkansas for more than 40 years, leading Hermitage teams to 8 national championships in forestry or livestock judging. His teams finished as reserve national champions on three other occasions. Additionally, his students won 41 state championships, either 4-H or FFA, in livestock, forestry, parliamentary procedure, horsemanship, public speaking and land judging. He also served as advisor to five state FFA officers.

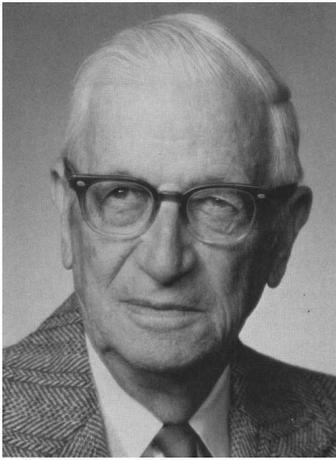
Those accomplishments alone merit his nomination, but Greenwood's larger contribution would be the countless lives he influenced as an agriculture teacher, high school principal, National Guardsman and tomato farmer. He instilled work ethic, leadership skills, and excellence in his students, many who have went on to pursue both degrees and careers in agriculture or related areas.

Greenwood took an interest in students' lives outside of the classroom. He provided barn space for those who may not have facilities of their own. He gave jobs hauling, cutting, and raking hay to many who needed extra income. He paid for travel expense and financed livestock projects for students who may not have the means to do so on their own. He provided a father figure to many.

In the community, he has served on numerous boards, committees and volunteered his time unselfishly. The Bradley County Fair and Livestock Show would not be what it is without his leadership and guidance. He has always been an active part of his church family. He serves on the Bradley County Medical Center board, the primary source for healthcare as well as many jobs in Bradley County. Recently, he challenged his agriculture education students to participate in cleaning up the highways and roadsides in their communities, also participating himself in keeping Bradley County clean. He has served on the Bradley County Farm Bureau Board as well as the Saline/Ouachita Valley Livestock board. An avid hunter, he has volunteered his time to teach Arkansas Hunter's Education Classes to hundreds of participants for many, many years.

Greenwood graduated from Warren High School and earned a degree in agri science from UA-Monticello in 1974. He also earned a master's degree at UAM as well as a certification in administration. He followed that with a degree in agriculture education from the University of Arkansas. He taught at Sparkman for two years before returning to Bradley County to serve as ag teacher at Hermitage for almost 40 years, including four years as the high school principal.

Greenwood has volunteered his time, his personal resources and his knowledge around the state and nation to help better Arkansas Agriculture and the future generations' understanding of what it means to be a leader and give back to your community. By believing in the future of agriculture, he has positively changed Arkansas FFA, 4H and Arkansas Agriculture as a whole.



## **Russell Roy Reynolds, Crossett**

Russell Roy (R.R.) Reynolds' contributions to modern, sustainable forest management are almost too numerous to adequately capture in a brief description. If not for visionary men like Reynolds, and the founding fathers of the Crossett Experimental Forest, sustainable forestry as we know it today might not exist.

The rise of the U.S. as an industrial power created a huge demand for raw materials, draining the once thought inexhaustible forests of eastern North America, and the near collapse of lumber companies that followed, were instrumental in an agreement between the Southern Forest Experiment State and the Crossett Lumber Company that led to the 1934 opening of the 1,680-acre Crossett Experimental Forest – Reynold's professional home for the next 35 years, directing the Crossett Experimental Forest's science program and conducting foundational research on southern pine silviculture.

A forest economist by training, Reynolds had the quantitative skills to conduct inventories of standing timber, time-and-motion studies related to logging practices, and the efficacy of using trucks to haul logs to the mill – all new concepts in the early 1930s. He worked closely with the management of the Crossett Lumber Company (and its successor, Georgia-Pacific) from 1933 until his retirement from the Forest Service in 1969.

Reynolds was the author or co-author of an estimated 175 publications during his career. This work is still widely cited by scientists today and is still incorporated in numerous textbooks on silviculture and forest management.

Reynolds was committed to taking the forestry knowledge gained at Crossett to multiple audiences. Reynolds and his staff provide field tours, workshops, and instructional training to thousands of forestry students, trained foresters, farmers, politicians, bankers and the general public. The "farm forty" compartments at the Crossett Experimental Forest and support programs developed by Reynolds led him to be considered one of the originators of these demonstrations on experimental forests. Additionally, Reynolds supported the efforts to develop the forestry degree program at Arkansas A&M College (now the University of Arkansas at Monticello).

He retired from the Forest Service in 1969 but remained active in the forestry field as a member of the Society of American Foresters and as a practicing tree farmer, as well as continuing to provide tours of the experimental forest and contributing to publications into the 1980s.

Reynolds received two Superior Service awards from the U.S. Forest Service, was named a fellow by the Society of American Foresters, and recognized by the Arkansas Wildlife Federations and the Southern Pulpwood Conservation Association. He was named *Progressive Farmer* Man of the Year in 1963.



## **Randy Veach, Manila**

Randy Veach exhibited the heart and spirit of a servant leader during his 11 years as president of Arkansas Farm Bureau. He spent a total of 20 years as a member of ArFB's board of directors, including five years as vice president under friend and mentor Stanley Reed, a Class XXV inductee into the Arkansas Agriculture Hall of Fame. Veach led with an unswerving set of personal priorities: faith, family, farming.

Whether meeting with state lawmakers, members of the Congressional delegation, federal policy makers, foreign governments or local farmers at a county Farm Bureau meeting, Veach was a consistent and passionate advocate for Arkansas agriculture.

A third-generation farmer, Veach farmed with his sons on land cleared by his father and grandfather.

Veach served as a member of the American Farm Bureau board of directors.. He was also president and chairman of the board of the Southern Farm Bureau Life Insurance Company, the first Arkansan to hold the office.

Veach served on the USDA/USTR Agricultural Trade Advisory Committee for Tobacco, Cotton and Peanuts. He is a member of the Arkansas World Trade Center board of advisors and on the Winthrop Rockefeller Institute on Petit Jean Mountain.

Veach carried a special interest in foreign trade. He understood that our farmers have the ability to produce more than we can consume in the United States. He felt that blessing provided Arkansas farmers an opportunity to help feed people around the globe, realizing the critical role that free and fair trade with international partners provided to the overall health of Arkansas (and American) agriculture. He was involved with agricultural trade missions to Ireland, Mexico, China, Cuba, Panama, South Korea, Japan, Belgium, Switzerland and Denmark.

His family were chosen as the 1998 Mississippi County Farm Family of the Year.

A deacon at Little River Baptist Church, Veach is a trustee of B.M.A. Theological Seminary in Texas, and was past board director of Baptist Hospital in Mississippi County. He also served 10 years on the Manila School Board.

Veach also served as a member of the Arkansas State Plant Board and the board for the National Cotton Council, and Cotton, Inc. He was also a member of the Arkansas Rice Research and Promotion Board.

Randy and Thelma have one son, Brandon, and four grandchildren. Another son, Justin, farmed with them when he passed away in 2008.



## **Mark Waldrip, Moro**

Mark Waldrip is a fourth-generation farmer from Moro (Lee County) who built a strong farming operation and created one of the mid-south's top seed companies.

Waldrip's contributions to agriculture are lifelong. Mark grew up working on his family's farm and was state president for Arkansas FFA. He studied agriculture economics at the University of Arkansas, where he served as president of all three major agriculture organizations on campus: Alpha Gamma Rho, Agriculture and Home Economics Students Association and Alpha Zeta Agricultural Honorary Society. He received the Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food, and Life

Sciences Outstanding Alumni Award in 2017. He also received the University of Arkansas Distinguished Alumni Award in 2017.

He then returned to the family farm and began to develop what would become extensive farmland and business holdings in eastern Arkansas. Waldrip's greatest contributions to community economic development are the many jobs his businesses have created for Arkansans.

Starting with an on-the-farm seed business in 1985, he created and operated East Arkansas Seeds, and expanded the business by purchasing Cullum Seeds, which would eventually become Armor Seed, which grew to cover 25 states and grew from \$5 million in sales to over \$100 million. As Armor Seed expanded, so did the opportunities it created for Arkansans and the benefits it provided to the state. Armor Seed was acquired in 2017 by Winfield United, a subsidiary of Land O' Lakes.

Besides business, Waldrip's volunteerism with agriculture has also been lifelong. He has served as president of the Lee County Farm Bureau, a board member and chairman of the Arkansas State Plant Board, and chairman of the Seed Committee of the State Plant Board. He served on the Board of Directors for Farm Credit Midsouth for 11 years. He also served 10 years as a member of the University of Arkansas board of trustees, including a term as chairman.

The Waldrips were recognized as Arkansas' Young Farmer and Rancher in 1985 and were named Lee County Farm Family of the Year in 1989. Waldrip's four children all have careers that touch agriculture, continuing a legacy of success and positive impact on agriculture. Waldrip currently serves as chairman of Big Creek Bancshares, which is the holding company for Armor Bank, which serves many rural and urban communities across the bank's footprint.



## **Andrew Wargo III, Watson**

Andrew Wargo III has spent more than 50 years as farm manager for the Baxter Land Company, where he has helped guide a conservation and stewardship plan that is emulated around the country. He has steered a large row-crop farm, gotten in (and out) of the catfish business and managed the farm's cotton gin. All with an eye on profitability and sustainability, and looking skyward.

Wargo grew up in Desha County and his parents paid for him to take a private pilot's course from a flight school in Clarksdale, Miss., the beginning of a successful flying career. He earned a degree in agriculture engineering from Arkansas State University and was a member of the ASU Sport Parachute Team that won the National Collegiate Championships in 1964.

After spending time as a flight instructor in Mississippi, Wargo returned to Arkansas and worked as an ag teacher (one year), principal (two years) and superintendent (one year) at Desha Central, his alma mater. He then was approached by the Bill Baxter about working for the Baxter Land Company. That job played directly into Wargo's inquisitiveness.

Farming equipment, products, and processes were changing rapidly during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s — the first three decades of Wargo's employment with Baxter Land Co. That time saw a major reduction in the use of row crop chemistries, and the ones being used became target-specific. Wargo helped stop what was called 'recreational tillage,' where each January we would disc the ground just because that's what we had been doing forever,' Conservation tillage became the norm.

By the late 1980s, the Baxters and Wargo began building a catfish farming operation, maintaining that business until 2008. He also managed the family's cotton gin, growing that to a 30,000-bale operation before it merged with two other facilities to become the Dumas Cotton Gin.

While president of the Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts, Wargo helped design a training program that eventually qualified 100 crop consultants to write farm plans which led to NRCS funding to fight the proliferation of herbicide-resistant weeds.

His list of activities and involvement is meaningful. He is a board member of the Delta Conservation Demonstration Center, president of the Arkansas Watershed Coalition, on the Boeuf-Tensas Regional Irrigation Water Distribution Board, the McGehee-Desha County Hospital Board of Governors, the Desha County Soil Conservation District board, president of Delta Crop Management, on the Advisory Committee for Stapl Cotn Cooperative, the NRCS State Technical Committee, the UA Discovery Farm committee, the Arkansas State Water Plan committee, and the Lower Mississippi River Initiative.

Wargo was elected to the Conservation Hall of Fame in 2016.