

Vice President's Letter



Education opens many paths, sometimes ones that are unexpected.

When Deanna Brown graduated from MSU's College of Veterinary Medicine in 1990, she hoped to put her education to use in a practice specializing in dairy cattle. She did follow that path for a while, but today Lt. Col. Brown is helping train veterinarians in Iraq to better serve their country's livestock producers. The

story of her work in Iraq starts on page 22 of this issue of Landmarks.

Entomologists are usually thought of as individuals who use their education to help farmers and others manage insect pests. There are, however, entomologists who seek specialized training to grow insects. MSU has been providing such training for almost a decade, and there's always a full house for the annual insect-rearing workshop. The story of the 2006 workshop is on page 14.

Helping young people discover the career paths available to them is one of the missions of the 4-H program. In 2007, 4-H will celebrate its centennial. The 4-H movement began in Holmes County in 1907 and has been helping young people explore their potential ever since. Upcoming issues of Landmarks will report on the 4-H centennial activities.

Production agriculture—the industry that produces our food and fiber— attracts some of this nation's most outstanding men and women. Nowhere was that more evident than in Clay County recently. Earlier this year, Ralph Weems, Jr., one of Mississippi and the nation's leading soybean producers, died. He left 600 acres of soybeans. In early October, his friends and neighbors organized to help the Weems family harvest the crop. Eight combines were able to get the beans harvested and ready to market in just a matter of hours. It was truly a community effort, with Bryan Foods in West Point providing lunch for the harvest crew.

The American farmer is a self-sufficient individual but also an individual who is selfless in service to others.

Students enrolled in the programs available in the Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine at MSU will follow many career paths after graduation. For some, the first path will lead to lifelong careers. Others will change career paths one or more times, and some will find themselves following unexpected paths. All of them, however, will do well to apply the example of a group of Clay County soybean producers to any path they follow.

Vance H. Watson

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