

BREAKING NEW GROUND



The hardest part of writing, for me at least, is coming up with an idea to put down on paper. The nuts and bolts of the article will generally fall into place if I can just get my hands around a good topic.

Fortunately, we have a number of "great idea people" here at Mississippi State, including Karen Brasher, my friend and a never-ending source of good ideas.

Karen is the College of Forest Resources' publication editor. A lot of the good things about us that you see in print or on the Web have her fingerprints all over them.

For this particular article I asked for her thoughts, and while she pondered the matter, she picked up the wooden pen box on my desk with the inscription "Pike County Tree Farmer of the Year" etched on the lid. She opened it, took out the pen inside bearing my dad's name, looked back at me and said, "Legacy. Write about legacy."

What an idea "legacy" is. It includes the things passed down to us that mean the most.

The legacy of the love for all things around me, the great outdoors, was instilled in me at an early age by my parents. I remember the first time my father took me fishing and taught me how to bait my hook; the first time I actually caught a fish;

walking in the woods and my father pointing out the different types of trees; my first hunting trip; and working on my family's tree farm.

Today, I am fortunate enough to work for a university that promotes and teaches about sustaining these special places.

Many people have started legacies in the Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine at MSU.

One example is gifts of timberland to the College of Forest Resources' Bulldog Forest. Gifts of scholarships are another legacy that individuals are providing at MSU.

With these gifts, we pass down to young people the legacy of an education. Also, we teach young people to continue the legacy by sharing with others the things that are important to them.

Please consider the legacy that you can give to a young person, whether it is through scholarships, becoming part of programs such as the Bulldog Forest or sending your child to Mississippi State University. Those are legacies that last forever.

Jeff Little
Director of Development
College of Forest Resources

Endowed Professorship Established in College of Veterinary Medicine

Supporting local humane shelters is how most individuals who care deeply for animals ensure the welfare of animals in their communities. For Marcia Lane of Columbus, support for the Columbus/Lowndes Humane Society has been a long-term priority.

Lane, a California native, grew up riding her bicycle down famed Sunset Boulevard. She now calls Mississippi home and shares 15 acres in Lowndes County with two steers, two fillies, three turkeys and several dogs and cats. Love of animals led to her support for the local humane society and the scope of her support recently expanded with the establishment of an endowed professorship in the College of Veterinary Medicine.

The Marcia Lane Endowed Professorship in Humane Ethics and Animal Welfare will help the college develop a collaborative relationship with animal sheltering organizations throughout Mississippi and the surrounding region.

"Marcia Lane's generous support provides the college an opportunity to recruit an outstanding veterinary medicine educator and leader," said Keith Gaskin, director of development for the College of Veterinary Medicine. "The holder of the endowed professorship will provide leadership in enhancing the college's support of spay/neuter programs and in the development of educational programs for school children focused on the proper care of animals and the problems caused by pet overpopulation."

Another long-term goal, he said, is the establishment of an internship and residency in shelter medicine for CVM students in association with the Columbus/Lowndes County Humane Society and other regional animal shelters.

The Lane fund is an open fund in the MSU Foundation that may be increased through additional contributions. For more information about giving to the College of Veterinary Medicine, contact Keith Gaskin at 662-325-3815.

Seal's Love of Forests Continues at MSU

In the early 1900s, Leo Seal worked summers at Weston Lumber Co. in Logtown in Harrison County for \$3.00 a week. His goal was to save enough money to attend Mississippi A & M College.

Seal accomplished his goal in 1911, graduating with a degree in civil and mining engineering. His love for natural resources, however, compelled him to return to Weston, where he became land manager for the company's 100,000 acres. Seal worked for Weston until called to service in Mississippi's 155 Infantry Regiment during World War I.

Throughout his career with the lumber company, Seal understood that reforestation was key to sustaining the forest. He urged Weston's owners to begin a reforestation program, pointing out that if they continued their 'cutting' program they eventually would not have a timber source for the mill. The owners were not impressed with the idea.

Seal resigned from his job with Weston in 1919 and began a career with Hancock County Bank, which is today's Hancock Bank. Even though his career path forked from natural resources, Seal pursued the idea of creating a sustainable forest. He was one of the first 'tree farmers' in Hancock County and actively promoted reforestation, selective thinning, and maintaining fire-breaks. He even offered cash rewards to prevent malicious setting of forest fires.

His love for reforestation also prompted him to have the bank purchase a mechanical tree planter at the end of World War II. The planter was made available at no cost to any Hancock County landowner who would plant seedlings.

Seal was honored as Forester of the Year for Mississippi's three coastal counties in 1962.

To continue the legacy that Seal began in reforestation and sustainability, his son, Leo Seal Jr., created the Leo W. Seal Sr. Memorial Forestry Scholarship in the College of Forest Resources at Mississippi State in 1966.

Leo Seal Jr. followed in his father's footsteps, choosing a career with Hancock Bank. Today he is chairman of Hancock Holding Company and has many interests at Mississippi State, but he is always mindful of his father's love of forests.

For more information about giving to the College of Forest Resources, contact Jeff Little at (662) 325-8151.

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New Home in the Works for Agricultural and Biological Engineering

A new home is planned for one of MSU's most vital and unique academic departments.

A new 40,000 square-foot, \$11 million building for the Agricultural and Biological Engineering Department will be located on the site of the old "Tin Gym" next to McCarthy Gymnasium. The new building will house offices, modern classrooms and state-of-the-art laboratories. The location is near the Bagley College of Engineering and the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, which share responsibility for the department.

The Agricultural and Biological Engineering Department attracts some of the best and brightest students from across the South, and a new building will help the program continue to recruit high-caliber students. Currently, freshmen entering the program have the highest ACT scores of all entering freshmen in Mississippi.

The department prepares students to enter medical school, to research and develop new energy sources, to manage agricultural enterprises and to pursue a variety of careers dealing with natural resources and ecosystems. On-going research in the department includes projects in the areas of biomedical engineering, environmental engineering, precision agriculture, agriculture systems, remote sensing, and biomass-based energy. Graduates of the program are pursuing careers as successful surgeons, patent attorneys, biomechanical product developers and managers of agricultural businesses.

The State of Mississippi has appropriated \$9.5 million in funds to assist with the project and fund-raising efforts are under way for the remaining \$1.5 million. Groundbreaking is scheduled for May, with completion of construction expected in 2008.

Gifts of any size are needed to make the facility a reality, and all contributions will count toward the university's State of the Future campaign. Donors will be acknowledged through the MSU Foundation's appropriate recognition societies. Naming opportunities in the building exist at various levels for donors who wish to leave a lasting mark at Mississippi State University.

For more information or to receive a brochure on naming opportunities, please telephone Jud Skelton, director of development, at (662) 325-0643 or email jskelton@foundation.msstate.edu.

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

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