

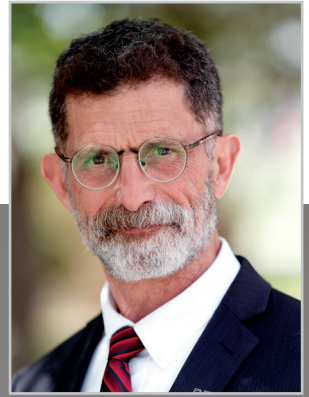


NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF
TECHNICAL AGRICULTURE

Dean's Newsletter

Spring 2019

Dean Ron Rosati, PhD



Dean's message to alumni and friends

The NCTA commencement on May 2 was a special event for nearly 80 students who are now among the ranks of NCTA alumni. Keynote address from UN-STA alumnus Joan Wieczorek Ruskamp, VetTech '80, encouraged the graduates to treasure the lifelong friendships forged during college. Her perspective on work ethic, perseverance and family agriculture resonated with the gymnasium full of family and friends. Thank you, Joan and congratulations, Class of 2019!

Campus is busy with summer programs such as livestock judging and youth range camps, 4-H workshops, and the 7-week residency of 50 UNL agricultural students from Rwanda. Their focus is hands-on agricultural skills development while living on campus until June 29.

It didn't take this group long to pitch in with farm chores as the 2019 experience has them caring for dairy cows, poultry, swine and goats. Their courses are three rotations of 2 weeks, each. They will be joined on campus by Veterinary Technology students who start their summer session on June 10. In this issue of the Dean's Newsletter we feature several articles about Aggie alumni. Our campus and academic programs earn student success with strong support from alumni, parents and families, and our industry partners.

Of note are expanded facility and academic resources such as upgrades to the agricultural mechanics program through a family gift honoring Coleridge native Gary Hansen, Class of '74. Or, the new 6-row planter designed and built by alumnus Anson Nielsen of Minden and largely donated through his friends and partners in the ag industry. Thank you all!

The generosity of Ann and David Bruntz of Friend has again recognized dedicated faculty with the Bruntz Family Award for Teaching. This year's recipient, Tee Bush, joins previous awardees Judy Bowmaster-Cole and Joanna Hergenreder.

We are proud of the industriousness of our faculty and coaches in teaching, mentoring and coordinating once-in-a-lifetime opportunities for students. Whether in the classroom, in volunteer service or in competitions, students are skillfully guided to unique opportunities. We are a better campus due to the dedicated faculty and staff at NCTA. Our Aggie students and campus family realize the value of the close-knit community we have in Curtis. Each of you who attended high school or college here remember the sense of community.

Following winter storms and devastating flooding in March, the NCTA campus and local community rallied to support affected Nebraskans. Thank you to those who made donations to the pasta feed fundraiser which raised over \$4,000, or donated hay, livestock feed and supplies at the campus collection point.

We appreciate your ongoing interest in NCTA and Aggie programs. I invite you to come to campus and see the outstanding facilities, academic programs and opportunities for learners of all ages. And, I look forward to thanking each of you, personally, for making a difference in the lives of NCTA Aggie students.

— Ron Rosati, NCTA dean

Hansens appreciate ag mechanics program

The family of Gary W. Hansen has made a significant financial gift to the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture as a tribute to the life of the Coleridge, Nebraska native who gained his early technical skills in agricultural mechanics at Curtis.

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

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

His brother, Byron, class of '78, says there is little doubt that Gary regarded his time at UNSTA as among the most enjoyable years of his life.

"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," writes Byron.

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

"Throughout his life, Gary considered the training he received at UNSTA as, perhaps, the most beneficial technical instruction of his life time", says Byron, a longtime agricultural lender in Kearney.

"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."

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 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 later, Byron and his father, Claire, decided to return to the place Gary loved.

In December, they toured the agricultural mechanics program, and saw first-hand how they could help. Today, an updated classroom and welding shop is better equipped for technical training resources. Their gift has funded a Phase I upgrade.

The multi-level shop building, which has a stairway on the south side, will soon be accessible when the 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 sole classroom is modernized with all new furniture, paint, wider doorway, storage units, desks and internet.

Before his death in March of this year, Gary's father, Claire, had also decided with Byron to commit to funding Phase II. 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.

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.

Byron 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."



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

APS '94 alumnus noted for ranch conservation

The Russ Sundstrom family of the Broken Box Ranch near Moorefield was recognized in April for land conservation efforts.

Sundstrom, his wife, Angela, and their daughter, Cheyenne, age 11, received the 2019 Nebraska Leopold Conservation Award® in a ceremony at the State Capitol in Lincoln.

Russ attended NCTA from 1992-94, earning an associate degree in APS with a meat animal emphasis.

"I am now using more of the soils and natural resources courses that I took," he said. "Education is never a waste."

Russ is active in two volunteer-driven prescribed burning associations, working with landowners in range and land management. Conservation techniques include intense "mob" grazing.

He and his brother, Neil, also operate a general land clearing business, removing Eastern redcedar and Russian olive trees, excavating, installing pipelines and creating roadways.

Russ is in his 25th year as a locomotive engineer with Union Pacific in North Platte.

Another connection to the NCTA campus is wood chips.

Sundstrom's business supplies the cut trees to John Hahn, who then processes them into wood chips delivered to NCTA for its boiler system.

Landowners in the Loess Canyon areas in eastern Frontier County and nearby work together on controlled burning.

"I call our geographic location the tree belt ... a prescribed burn is almost a necessity as you can't do everything mechanically in the terrain."

The Leopold award is a national program presented by the Sand County Foundation. It comes with a ranch sign and \$10,000 prize.



Angela, Russ, and Cheyenne Sundstrom of Moorefield.

No-till planter can be top recruiting tool

Agronomy students at NCTA will now have "the latest and greatest" of modern field technology with delivery in late April of a new, fully equipped 6-row, no-till planter, says the alumnus who built it.

Anson Nielsen, APS '99, is a Minden-area farmer and owner of Nielsen Ag Equipment who spent this winter coordinating suppliers, components, donors, volunteers, even neighbors as builders.

Several wrote checks to help buy planter parts.

The new planter replaces one that Nielsen recalls working on two decades ago as an NCTA student of instructor and mentor Gary Wach.

"I told Dr. Ramsdale a couple years ago that NCTA needed a new planter in order to attract students to the college," Nielsen shares. "So, when Brad called and said he had some money to build a planter, I said that's enough to do what I think you need."

Nielson, who went on to graduate in agricultural science from UNL in 2001 with a minor in agronomy and ag business, said he immediately got busy acquiring components.

"A lot of suppliers wanted to donate things," he said, including Precision Planting® the company for whom he is dealer.

Nielsen said he was able to get many items donated or at great discounts. Components came rolling in such as the tool bar and gauge wheels, back closing and fertilizer system, meters, brackets, top units, row cleaners, hydraulic cylinders, labor and more.

Professor Ramsdale is learning the bells and whistles of all the new technology of the Delta Force V Drive system, supplying hydraulic down-force and independent row control for correct seed placement.

The technology will be ideal for teaching in real-time or building long-term archives.

"His students could be in the classroom and he could stream that planter as he plants. All of his maps and so forth they could put up into the Cloud," Nielsen said.

Nielsen estimates it is at least a \$50,000 planter. A \$9,000 grant from federal Perkins funds will be applied to the final cost.

"I knew what a great school it is and was when I was there. I wanted to enhance what these kids are doing and learning on. That is the type of planter they will see out in the industry now. It will be a great for recruiting."



Anson Nielsen speaks to students about the new planter.

Two alumni, three faculty saluted by parents

Judy Bowmaster-Cole, VT '92, and Dan Stehlik, PA, '75, were among three NCTA faculty receiving awards from the University of Nebraska Parents Association.

Assistant Professor Bowmaster-Cole, LVT, known to students as "J-Bow" worked as the necropsy supervisor at the UNL Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, then returned to NCTA to join the faculty.

Dan Stehlik is instructor for NCTA welding, electricity and irrigation technology courses in the Agricultural Mechanics program. He taught Ag Ed from 1995-2015 in two Kansas high schools before starting at NCTA in 2015.

Ricky Sue Barnes, DVM, also was recognized at the March event in Lincoln. Dr. Barnes has taught at NCTA from 1977-1979, and 1989 to present.



Jim & Helen Gran Scholarship

In June 2019, NCTA animal science major **Anna Whyman** of Lincoln, will receive the third annual Jim and Helen Gran Scholarship, of \$1,200 from the Nebraska Cattle Foundation. The Grans were ranchers at Gordon and active in Nebraska's beef industry and Nebraska Stock Growers. After Helen's passing, Jim retired and now lives in Lincoln. In 2016, Jim endowed the scholarship specifically for an NCTA sophomore. Anna is serving a summer internship at the NCTA campus farm. She graduates in December, and starts in animal science at UNL in January.

Two NCTA alumni were Gran scholars:

2018- **Logan Van Anne** of Gering, an animal science major and NCTA resident assistant, graduated on May 2. Currently, Logan is managing his mother's cowherd north of Dalton while interning in agronomy at the Dalton coop. This fall, he will attend UNL to earn a bachelor's in agribusiness.

2017 - **Emilye Vales** of DeWitt, was Ag Ed at NCTA and on the Aggie Livestock Judging Team. She completed her Ag Ed program at UNL in May, 2019, and will be teaching agriculture and FFA at Columbus Lakeview this fall.



Jim and Helen Gran, NCTA donors

Help us expand our Aggie reach

Recruiting students to campus is a year-round effort at NCTA.

Exposure of younger students in 4-H programs, middle school and high schools to the many academic opportunities and career training at NCTA has proven beneficial.

Groundwork laid at schools, expos and college fairs the past few years paid off last fall when a 23-year high of 275 fulltime students started their fall semester.

The 7.8% increase from 2017 combined with previous upward trajectories tallied a 5-year increase of 20.6%.

Tina Smith previously led recruiting efforts and transitioned into a new admissions capacity last fall. Now, she focuses on new student enrollment days, admissions and international students, transfer programs for NCTA students heading to UNL, and special campus events.

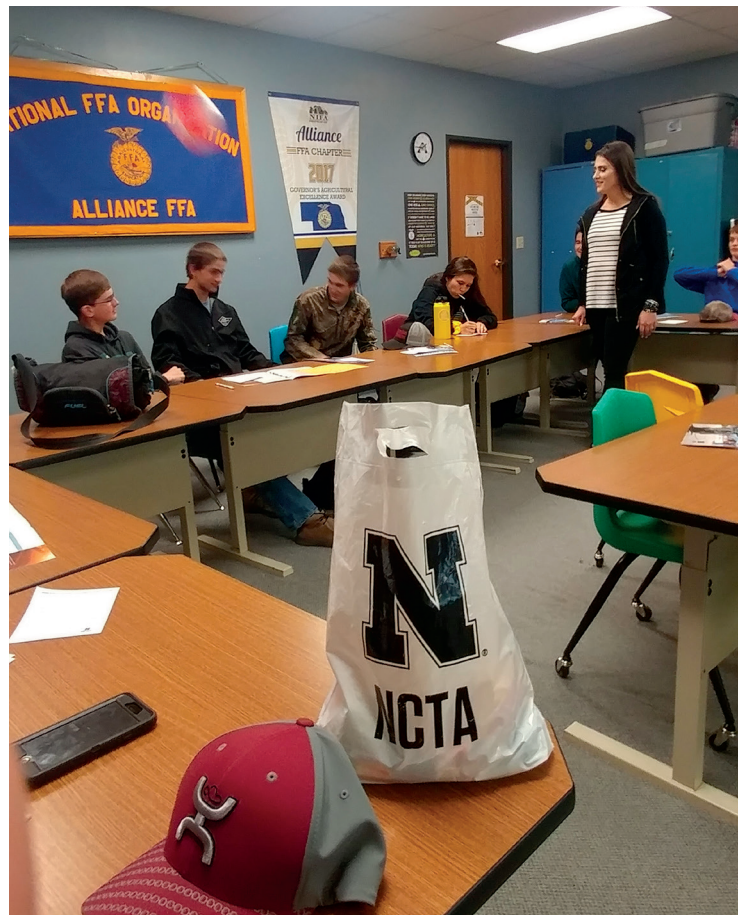
Recruiting coordinator Emily Griffiths was assisted for 2018-2019 by Juliana Kroeger of Dannebrog. However, Juliana's departure in July to become the ag teacher and FFA advisor at Palmer High School now creates a job opportunity. Know anyone interested?

Since June, 2018, NCTA has had a strong presence at 90 high schools, 40 college fairs, and eight state FFA conventions, and the National FFA Convention expo in Indianapolis. NCTA recruiters participated in 15 other conferences/expos, and hosted or assisted in 20 on-campus group events recruiting prospective students.

Alumni can be an integral part of outreach, Griffiths says. Volunteers can contact Emily to assist an hour or more at Nebraska Cattlemen's Classic, Nebraska State Fair, Ak-Sar-Ben and Husker Harvest Days.

Or, join an NCTA recruiter at a school program in your community. Invite a speaker to your 4-H or FFA events or county fair.

Contact: Emily Griffiths at egriffiths3@unl.edu or 308.367.5255.



Emily Griffiths visits Alliance High School ag class. Students compete for prizes in a trivia game as a beach ball is tossed back and forth

Nebraska Cattlemen Beef State Scholarship

McKenzie Beals Weber, APS '2015, has received the Nebraska Cattlemen Beef State Scholarship of \$10,000. After attending NCTA, McKenzie attended UNL and will be a third-year veterinary student this fall in the Professional Program of Veterinary Medicine with the University of Nebraska and Iowa State University. The native of Friend studied animal science and was the class Valedictorian in 2015.

Aggie Alumni scholar is valedictorian



Shayla Woracek of Maxwell was valedictorian of the Class of '19. The animal science major is working at the family ranch west of Maxwell for the summer, helping with cattle brandings and with her father's beef herd. Thomas Woracek is an '85 graduate of UNSTA. As a result of having a parent as an alumnus, Shayla was one of three 2018 Aggie Alumni Association scholarship recipients. On campus, she represented Phi Theta Kappa academic honorary as the 2-year student in the Aggie Student Senate.

Cole Sundquist of Ainsworth, also a 2018 Aggie Alumni Association scholarship recipient, is the third generation of the Sundquist family to graduate from NCTA. His grandfather Jerry and father Jeremy are both alumni, as is his mother Cody Steckel Nilson. Cole graduated May 2 in APS animal science. He is working on a ranch near Wellfleet while developing an agricultural auction and livestock business. Cole is shown in this photo between his father and grandfather.



Kansas cowboy is Aggie of the Year



Associate Dean Jennifer McConville, Damian Wellman, and Dean Ron Rosati at awards night on May 1.

Damian Wellman of Prairie View, Kansas was named the 2019 Aggie of the Year.

Wellman, a third-year livestock management major, is serving his summer internship at a ranch in Wyoming, the ideal spot for an avid horseman. One nomination letter said Damian Wellman is reliable, always "doing whatever is necessary, whenever necessary."

Wellman served as a resident assistant for two years, is active with the NCTA Ranch Horse Team and competed at regional contests, and also worked as an employee of the NCTA Farm.

"I can always count on Damian for helping on campus," associate dean Jennifer McConville said. "He is a great all-around student."

Launching call for alumni class agents

By Ann Bruntz, President-elect
UNSTA, VT, '71

Hello Friends,

In order to strengthen our alumni organization we have sent out a call for CLASS Agents to help spread the word about the NSA/UNSA/UNSTA/NCTA Aggie Alumni Association.

Assist us by sharing information with your classmates and spreading the news about NCTA.

The following have stepped up to take on the task:

- 1971 - David & Ann Bruntz
- 1974 - Rahn Bek
- 1975 - Dave May
- 1976 - Steve & Joan Ruskamp
- 1979 - Boni Perks Edwards & Linda Ramos
- 1983 - Marti Jo Winget Fisher & Kim Bowers Mortensen
- 1984 & 86 - Robyn Kennedy
- 2001 - Stephanie Vogt Stedman
- 2014 - Mollie Taylor & Josi Arnold-Krumweide



Joan Wiecezorek Ruskamp, VT '80 and Steve Ruskamp, PA, '76

We need agents for every year. If you can help, email or call Ann K. Bruntz at ann_bruntz@hotmail.com or 402-366-6608. Or, you could also comment on the alumni Facebook pages. If you aren't connected, search for these addresses: NCTA Alumni and U.N.S.T.A. Alumni Page

David and I look forward to reconnecting through social media, and seeing many of you in Broken Bow on June 22nd!

Regards, Ann

Tee Bush, Mark Gardner earn NCTA awards

Year-end faculty and staff awards at NCTA included the Bruntz Family Award for Teaching presented to Tee Bush.

She is an associate professor of math and horticulture. Horticulture alumna Andrea Burkhardt wrote a compelling nomination for her teacher, mentor and friend. Teaching life skills and values is as important as subject matter.

"Tee never made me feel like I was beneath her," Burkhardt shared. "I always felt like I had a voice and my voice mattered. I feel that she looked out for me, as well as her other students, more than we realized."

Bush joined the faculty in September 2010.

The award was established in 2016 by an alumni couple, Ann and David Bruntz of Friend, in tribute to their daughter, Julie, who also was an alumna of the NCTA vet tech division. She passed suddenly in August 2016.

Recognizing the extraordinary impact an NCTA faculty member can have on students, David and Ann chose to recognize faculty at their alma mater. The award comes with a cash prize.

The Excellence in Service Award went to Mark Gardner of the custodial and security department. Gardner is well known around Curtis for assisting individuals on and off campus.



Tee Bush received the Bruntz Family Teaching Award and Mark Gardner the Excellence in Service Award in presentations made at a staff appreciation luncheon with coworkers and NCTA Dean Ron Rosati.

Aggie Alumni Weekend 2019

Honored classes: 1969, 1974, 1979, 1984, 1989, 1994, 1999, 2004, 2009, 2014 and 2019

Saturday June 22

1:00 p.m.: Alumni Board meeting
Bonfire Grill
509 S 9th Ave #103
Broken Bow, NE

5:30 p.m.: Social Time and Silent Auction
Nebraska One Box Convention Center
Cobblestone Hotel and Suites
2750 South 27th
Broken Bow, NE

Silent Auction contact: Ann Bruntz
402-366-6608 /
ann_bruntz@hotmail.com

Please bring an item for the silent auction

7:00 p.m.: Aggie Alumni Banquet
Nebraska One Box Convention Center
Cash bar available

Broken Bow Accommodations

Cobblestone Hotel and Suites 308-767-2060
www.staycobblestone.com/ne/broken-bow/

Boarders Inn and Suites 308-872-6428
www.staycobblestone.com/ne/broken-bow-boarders/

Arrow Hotel 308-872-6662
<http://arrowhotel.com/>

Alumni Officers:

President: Dave Mehaffey, 1983 Ag Mech
President-elect: Ann Bruntz, 1971 VT
Secretary: Catherine Hauptman, 2003 VT
Treasurer: (new person to be elected in June)

Alumni Board members:

Ann and David Bruntz, Boni Edwards, Dan Stehlik,
Dave May, Gene Heller, Jerry Sundquist,
Stephanie Stedman, Dave Mehaffey, Catherine
Hauptman, Kim Mortensen, Linda Ramos,
Craig Buescher, Mary Crawford
(Send news tips to – mcrawford@unl.edu)

Registration form for Aggie Alumni Banquet

Please return this form with complete details and a
check payable to *Aggie Alumni Association* by
June 12, 2019

Mail to:

Aggie Alumni Association
c/o Catherine Hauptman
404 East 7th St Curtis, NE 69025
(308) 367-5200 or chauptman4@unl.edu

Name(s): _____

Department: _____

Graduation Year: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Email Address*: _____

Annual Alumni Membership Fee per Alumnus:

\$15 _____

OR

Already a lifetime member: _____

Saturday June 22nd

of Banquet Meals: _____ at \$40/person

Total Enclosed: _____

(Tear this half off and send in with your payment)

**Please provide e-mail address if you have one.
This will help with registrations. If you would also
like to receive occasional Aggie news releases,
please check here _____*

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Building a herd through NCTA Heifer Link program

When Hunter Lee and Bailey Fleischman graduated in May they took home more than a diploma.

Each is the new owner of a yearling breeding heifer, a result of the NCTA Heifer Link program. The program was started by Fred Bruning and his son, Reiss, an NCTA alumnus, to assist Nebraska students in the cattle industry.

Aggie students in animal science, livestock management, diversified agriculture or agricultural education are eligible.

Hunter Lee of Chapman graduated in animal science. He presented a long-term plan to Professor Meredith Cable for financing and building his herd in Merrick County where he is employed for a neighbor.

Meanwhile, his classmate, Bailey Fleischman of Tekamah also met criteria to take a heifer home to his family's operation. Bailey will attend UNL this fall in animal science.



Hunter Lee of Chapman, at left, and Baily Fleischman of Tekamah

"We appreciate the support we receive from Nebraska cattle producers and other Heifer Link donors who provide the resources needed to make this program work," said Ron Rosati, NCTA dean. "Without that support, we could not assist young people to grow their cattle businesses."

To become a Heifer Link sponsor monetarily or with cattle donations, contact NCTA or Craig Buescher at the University of Nebraska Foundation.