

# Lessons Learned from the Previous Generation of Agricultural and Extension Educators

Candy Grant, Rachel Hendrix, Dr. Kirk Swartzel, Dr. Carla Jagger

## Introduction & Methodology

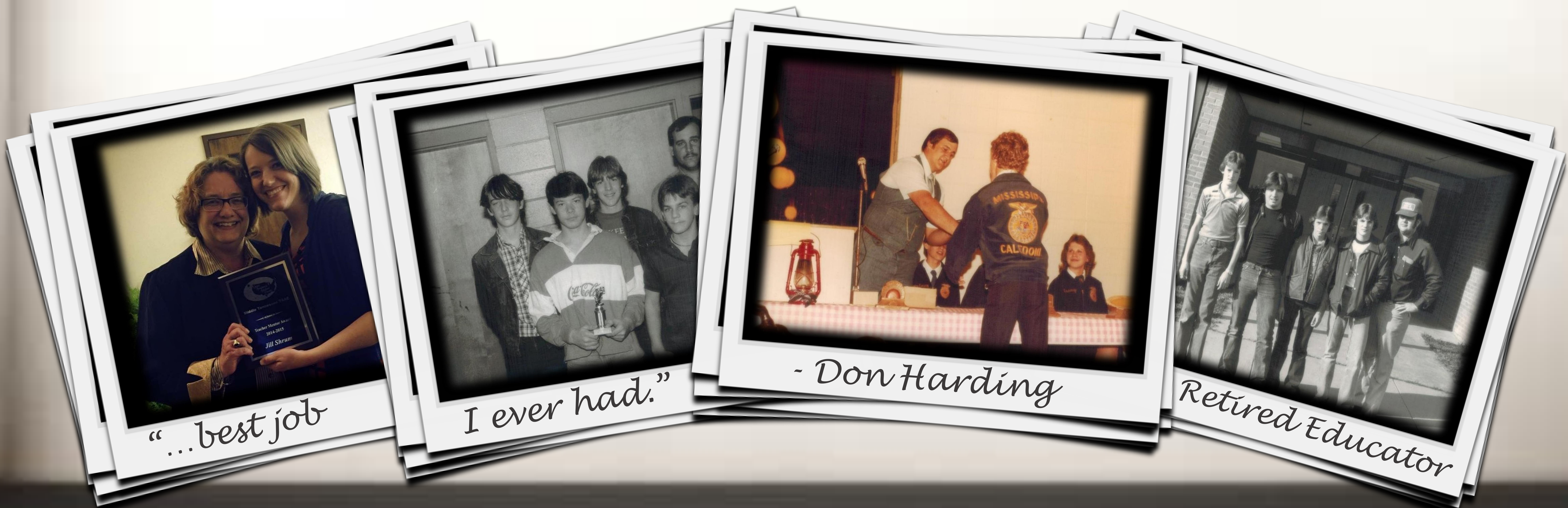
- Six retired agriculture educators and extension agents were interviewed by graduate students in Historical Foundations of Agricultural and Extension Education (AELC 8593)
- Each reflected upon their backgrounds, careers, inspirations, experiences, legacies, and their views of the future of agricultural education
- Interviews were narratively structured and analyzed for broad themes and subcomponents

## Impact on the Profession

- Recognizing how previous educators and extension agents faced challenges can guide the profession into the 21<sup>st</sup> century
- Exploring factors that affect motivation and job satisfaction assist in attracting and retaining new educators and agents
- Reflection leads to gains in knowledge and understanding (Kolb, 1984) and illustrates the human experience (Cronon, 1992)

## Emergent Themes

- Backgrounds and Career Paths
  - Rural upbringing with 4-H and FFA experience
  - Most entered education with previous job experience
  - Shaped by segregation, gender, education, government, and local factors
- Changes in Agricultural Education and Extension
  - Increasing role of technology in agriculture
  - Topics addressed and emerging needs
  - Role of women, minorities, and non-farmers
  - Increased responsibilities, decreased benefits and budgets, more government interference
- Views to the Future
  - Need for greater awareness of agriculture in general
  - Better relations with business and government
  - Change is inevitable, but the past should be appreciated
- Personal Legacies
  - Building positive relationships with students and coworkers
  - Improving oneself personally and professionally
  - Acting as a positive influence and role model



### References

Cronon, W. (1992). A place for stories: Nature, history, and narrative. *The Journal of American History*, 78(4), 1347-1376.

Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development* (Vol. 1). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.



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