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# CASNR Chronicle



**December 2016**



As the holidays approach, it seems appropriate to think about why we are so fortunate, and many reasons easily come to my mind as I sit here before the computer screen. The College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (CASNR) is not a building, not just an organizational structure, and not merely a cog in a bigger institution. When I think about CASNR, what comes to mind are the people who make our college great! Our awesome students, so many of whom

have personal stories as impressive as their achievements. Our alumni who represent our college in the best way possible through their accomplishments and achievements. And our dedicated faculty and

staff, who give so generously of their expertise, energy, and enthusiasm—along with their hearts—to assist our students and alumni achieve their goals and dreams.

We are celebrating two major events at commencement Friday. As I mentioned, CASNR has many accomplished alumni, and while we have seen the University of Tennessee award honorary doctoral degrees to deserving graduates of other colleges, to date, we have not done so ourselves. This year, however, we have chosen to recognize one of ours for incredible career achievements and his generous support here that is advancing our students through internship opportunities they would not have otherwise had.

Our honoree is Mr. James Herbert, who attained a BS in animal science in 1962. He has achieved much since his graduation and today is most known as a co-founder of Neogen Corporation, a food and animal safety company with over \$300 million in revenue. Under Mr. Herbert's guidance, Neogen has thrived so well that it has been ranked nine times as one of Forbes magazine's 200 Best Small Companies in America and five times as one of Fortune magazine's 100 Fastest-Growing Small Companies in America. Mr. Herbert's leadership and achievements have led to well-deserved recognition, not only in the US, but also internationally. In recognition of his partnership with higher education to foster research and other scholarly activities, both Michigan State University and Queen's University in Belfast, Ireland, have bestowed honorary doctoral degrees upon him—and now, his home institution has chosen to award its first honorary doctorate in agriculture to Mr. Herbert for his outstanding career and academic impacts.

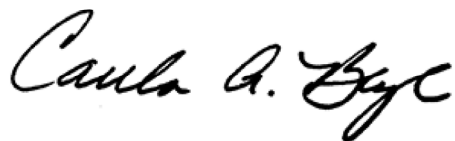
Mr. Herbert has given generously to CASNR to create and support internship opportunities for students who might otherwise not have the chance to put their knowledge into practice. We were fortunate to have him deliver the commencement address at our 2015 CASNR graduation ceremony. On that occasion, Mr. Herbert shared insights and perspective he has gained through service as an officer or member of the Board of Directors for more than thirty corporations during his career. He has certainly come a long way from his humble beginnings on a family cotton and cattle farm in Memphis, Tennessee, and he

credits much of his success to life lessons taught to him during his time at the University of Tennessee.

As a dean, I see how students often struggle with adversity, obstacles, and catastrophes on their path to graduation. Life has a way of offering surprises and not all of these are pleasant or welcomed. I want to call your attention to one student of CASNR, whose story is particularly inspiring. [Tosha Hatfield's story \(click here\)](#) is one of courage and triumph that I hope will inspire each of us to keep on fighting even when life seems to crash upon us like a tsunami, repeatedly and with vengeance. For Tosha, assistance from our Student Crisis Fund made the ultimate difference overcoming the obstacles she faced. For many years, the CASNR Dean's Office has dreamed of establishing a fund to help students through the really tough spots that can occur and, for many, could end their pursuit of a degree. So, this is also a note of profound gratitude to donor Charles Wharton, who made this fund possible and, through it, has helped students like Tosha through challenging situations and enabled their launch.

During the holidays ahead, I encourage you to celebrate your blessings, reflect on how to serve others, and enjoy being surrounded by family and friends. I certainly will be doing so, and extend a most heartfelt thank you to all the extraordinary folks who make up my CASNR extended family!

In closing, I'd like to call your attention to two recent and special impacts detailed below. They remind us that this season is about service, and that is what brings the real joy to this time.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Caula A. Beryl". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Caula A. Beryl, Dean

### **Fire Relief Efforts**



In the wake of devastating wildfires that engulfed so much of our region—Sevier County, in particular—the UT Center for Leadership and Service quickly organized a donation drive for relief items. The College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources readily supported their mission with our students, faculty, and staff providing an outpouring of donations that far exceeded expectations.



Pet food, socks, a microwave oven, water, snacks, first aid items, and much more were among the items given across two days at collection points in Morgan Hall and the Brehm Animal Science Building. CASNR members' overwhelming support for victims of these fires was humbling, and a true testament to Tennessee's legacy of volunteering.

### **Operation Christmas Child**





Each year an organization called Samaritan's Purse collects thousands of shoeboxes filled with toiletries, school supplies, toys, and clothing and delivers them to children in need throughout the world. The recipients of these boxes desperately need life's most basic necessities. Churches, businesses, and organizations assist with Operation Christmas Child. Tennessee 4-H does too, and through them, Operation Christmas Child has become a tradition on our campus each holiday season, as people step up in a big way to help.

This year, volunteers packed 541 boxes and donated nearly \$3,800 to help pay for shipping. Mr. Justin Crowe, a UT Extension 4-H specialist, commented on the importance of service and how engaged employees and students in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources are. He says, "I think this project promotes global citizenship which is something I personally value and something that 4-H values." It's clearly something valued, also, by CASNR students and employees.

## Contact Us

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