

# Press Release

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## NEAFCS ANNOUNCES THE 2026 HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

NEAFCS (National Extension Association of Family & Consumer Sciences), the professional association for Extension Family and Consumer Science professionals, recognized three exceptional women inductees for their commitment, dedication and effective leadership and involvement in NEAFCS at the state, regional and/or national level. They were inducted into the Hall of Fame at the 2026 NEAFCS Annual Session held in Knoxville, Tennessee on October 1, 2026.

### THE 2026 DISTINGUISHED INDUCTEES ARE:

- Lorrie Coop
- Patsy Ezell
- Barbara Woods

*"The National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences Hall of Fame was established in 2019 to recognize outstanding NEAFCS members who have contributed their time, talent and/or treasure to the NEAFCS."*

### INDUCTEES' BACKGROUND AND ACHIEVEMENTS

#### **Lorrie Coop**

Throughout her career, Lorrie has strengthened families, communities, and the Extension profession through innovative programming, collaborative partnerships, leadership development, and professional service.

As both a County Extension Agent and District Extension Administrator, Lorrie has focused on building meaningful relationships while developing programs and resources that address emerging community needs and expand educational opportunities across Texas and beyond. During her tenure as a county agent, she designed and delivered numerous educational programs in nutrition, food safety, mental wellness, and community development.

Since 2021, Lorrie has served as a District Extension Administrator, providing leadership for a 24-county district and coordinating professional development across a 45-county region. In this role, she leads onboarding and training for new agents,

provides career ladder coaching, organizes district conferences and planning meetings, mentors them in program development and leadership, and encourages them to take advantage of the many professional development opportunities that are available to them through association membership. She also serves as a liaison and advocate for Extension with county and state elected officials.

Lorrie joined (NEAFCS) in 2004 and has remained an active and dedicated member ever since. She has attended more than 15 Annual Sessions and has contributed as a concurrent session presenter, panelist, room host, and Awards Judge. Her professional excellence has been recognized through numerous honors, including the Distinguished Service Award, Continued Excellence Award, and the 2018 Educator of the Year Award.

Her commitment to professional service extends across the district, state and national levels of the association serving in numerous elected and appointed leadership roles including TEAFCS District Director, Associate Director, First Vice President (Awards and Recognition), and Texas Extra Newsletter Editor. Nationally, she served as Co-Liaison for the 2018 NEAFCS Annual Session and Southern Region Director. She has also contributed as a member of the NEAFCS Endowment and Nominating Committees and currently serves on the Member and Life Member Committee, the Access, Engagement and Outreach Committee, and as Chair of the Public Affairs Committee.

Throughout her career, Lorrie has remained steadfast in her commitment to the mission of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, NEAFCS, and the land-grant system. She leads with integrity, empathy, and a deep belief that education should be accessible, relevant, and empowering.

### **Patsy Ezell**

Dr. Patsy Ezell joined NEAFCS in 1977 during her first year of employment with the University of Tennessee Extension, when the association was known as the National Association of Extension Home Economists (NAEHE). Throughout an Extension career spanning nearly five decades, she provided distinguished leadership, scholarship, and service to both the UT Extension and the University of Maryland Extension (UME).

At the University of Tennessee Extension, Dr. Ezell served as Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) or 4-H Agent in three counties, Tennessee Nutrition Education Program Specialist, and District and Regional FCS Program Leader. In 2008, she joined the University of Maryland Extension as State FCS Program Leader and member of the UME State Leadership Team, earning tenure at the University of Maryland. She served as State Program Leader for more than a decade before retiring in 2020 and becoming a Life Member of NEAFCS. Demonstrating her enduring commitment to Extension, she returned from retirement in 2022 to serve as Interim State FCS Program Leader through 2024 when the position became vacant.

Upon assuming leadership at UME, Dr. Ezell's highest priority was expanding the reach and impact of Family and Consumer Sciences programming across Maryland by recruiting, mentoring, and developing outstanding Extension faculty. During her tenure, she hired more than 60 percent of the UME FCS educators.

Dr. Ezell's commitment to NEAFCS is reflected in decades of active participation, scholarship, professional leadership, and service. She was recognized with the Distinguished Service Award (1987), Continued Excellence Award (1998), and 25-Year Service Award (2002). She attended 25 Annual Sessions, and was a frequent presenter and reviewer, sharing innovative programs, leadership strategies, and professional development experiences with colleagues nationwide. As State FCS Program Leader, she strongly championed NEAFCS membership and participation as an essential component of new faculty development, encouraging educators to attend Annual Sessions to build professional networks, strengthen leadership skills, and gain a broader understanding of Family and Consumer Sciences programs across the nation.

Among her most memorable NEAFCS leadership experiences was serving on the 2004 Annual Session Facilities and Speakers Committees in Nashville, where members welcomed one of the largest conference delegations in the association's history.

Throughout her career, Dr. Ezell credits NEAFCS with providing invaluable opportunities for professional growth, leadership development, collaboration, and lifelong friendships. Her enduring legacy is reflected in the many Family and Consumer Sciences professionals whose careers she has influenced and in her unwavering commitment to advancing Extension, FCS, and the mission of NEAFCS.

### **Barbara Woods**

Dr. Barbara Woods exemplified excellence in service, leadership, and mentorship within the National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences. Throughout her distinguished 36-year career in Extension, she showed unwavering commitment to advancing the profession while quietly elevating those around her. A trailblazer in her field, Dr. Woods was among the first women to serve in an Extension IT leadership role, setting a standard of innovation, integrity, and inclusion.

Dr. Woods' dedication to NEAFCS spanned decades and continued beyond her retirement in 2023, when she became a life member. She stayed actively engaged until her passing in January 2025, including participation in the 2024 NEAFCS Annual Session. Her service included roles as a state officer, national Endowment Committee member, and enthusiastic volunteer, always contributing with humility, reliability, and grace.

Known for her keen ability to recognize and nurture leadership potential, Dr. Woods encouraged colleagues to pursue professional growth through awards, presentations, and education. Her influence extended nationally through two decades of service as an evaluator for Extension's Children, Youth, and Families at Risk project, where she strengthened communities and enhanced program impact across the country. A committed advocate for professional excellence, she also chaired the AAFCS Professional Certifications Committee for several years.

Dr. Barbara Woods' legacy is one of service, meaningful mentorship, and enduring impact visible in the programs and people she touched. She empowered professionals, strengthened communities, and advanced the mission of Family and Consumer

Sciences through her work in inclusion, evaluation, financial literacy, and technology. Her life reflected the very heart of NEAFCS.

## **ABOUT NEAFCS**

The National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS) educates and recognizes Extension professionals who impact the quality of life for individuals, families and communities. NEAFCS is the professional organization for Extension Family and Consumer Sciences that builds leaders for the future, recognizes and promotes excellence and scholarship in Extension Family and Consumer Sciences programming, provides innovative professional growth and development opportunities, serves as a nation-wide resource for education, information, networking and partnerships, promotes Extension Family and Consumer Sciences and the mission and goals of the Land Grant University Extension System.

NEAFCS includes more than 2,900 members. To learn more, please visit [www.neafcs.org](http://www.neafcs.org).