

Voices From the Past – Present – Future

Christine Kniep (WI), Past President & Historian

On June 29th, 1933, in Milwaukee, WI, during the annual meeting of the American Home Economics Association, The National Home Demonstration Agents' Association became a reality. Present were twenty-one home demonstration agents from 13 states: Alabama, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Vermont, Virginia and Wyoming.

The 90th Anniversary Committee has asked each of these 13 states to collect stories of their work and membership in NEAFCS from a retired or life member, the affiliate president, and a "new" member – the start of an ongoing narrative history of NEAFCS. Between now and our 100th Anniversary, stories will be collected from all of the affiliates. These stories will be included in our newsletter, posted on our website, and included in our historical records.



It is with great pleasure I share the first set of stories from the Missouri Affiliate, featuring:

* **Past-Denise Sullivan-
Life Member, Retired**

* **Present-Carrie Elsen-
MEAFCS
President 2024**

* **Future-Sue Robison-MEAFCS
Treasurer 2024**

PAST

My name is Denise Sullivan and I retired in January 2024 from the University of Missouri Extension as the Jackson County Nutrition and Health Education Specialist. My 7 years in Missouri capped off a 38-year Extension career, having previously worked for Extension in Kansas for 28 years and Texas for just under 3 years. I have been a member of NEAFCS for my entire career and served in numerous leadership positions, including president of the Kansas affiliate and secretary of the Missouri affiliate.

I joined NEAFCS because I was invited! I quickly realized that membership was a way to learn and grow as a young professional. Not only did it allow me to connect with colleagues in my state, but I also met peers in other states, many who became good friends. My favorite impactful project with MU Extension was the Senior

Farmers Market Nutrition Program. Through a partnership with the Missouri Department of Agriculture, I worked with colleagues in the Urban West region (Kansas City metro) to enroll eligible senior citizens for a \$50 benefit to purchase locally grown fruits & vegetables at farmers markets. During the 3-year project (which started I have many fond memories of NEAFCS conferences, but among my favorites were seeing the balloon festival while in New Mexico and the Hershey chocolate world in Pennsylvania.

My wish for NEAFCS is innovation during challenging times and continued success for professional growth opportunities.



PRESENT



My name is Carrie Elsen, and I am honored to be the 2024 Missouri Extension Family Consumer Science (MEAFCS) President. Several years ago, I made the decision to join this organization, and I would not be the person I am today without it. This organization has provided me with the valuable tools and support to flourish and lead in my profession. The ability to network among colleagues nationally and ample professional development opportunities has been invaluable.

My favorite project has been the NEAFCS Leadership Experience. The Leadership Experience was created to empower the next generation of NEAFCS leaders, giving extension professionals the opportunities for growth in leadership. I will be forever grateful for the personal growth, connections, and collaborations obtained from this experience. I am ecstatic about my continued involvement within the NEAFCS Members Resources, Mentoring and Leadership Subcommittee, "Leadership Experience."

As Missouri's president, I have been given the highest honor to represent and uphold our mission of supporting, promoting, and recognizing MEAFCS educators. Missouri continually strives to offer professional development opportunities for our members. In recent years, our educators have successfully advanced our educational offerings in the virtual setting to help broaden our reach to our Missouri participants. My wish for the organization is to continually grow, develop, and flourish our profession to meet people's needs where ever they are!

FUTURE

Hello, my name is Sue Robison, and I have been a NEAFCS member for 4 years. I am a member of Missouri Extension Association of Family and Community Sciences affiliate. My story with NEAFCS began through the encouragement of a colleague. The wealth of webinars initially drew me in, covering topics from food preservation to leadership and community engagement. These invaluable sessions have enriched my knowledge and equipped me with the professionalism needed to better serve the citizens in my role as a Nutrition and Health Specialist.

Joining NEAFCS has been beneficial. The support and shared commitment from Extension colleagues from all over the nation to share their commitment to excellence have encouraged me to continue to grow and learn. NEAFCS has had a positive impact on my life and the lives of other members.

Today, as a State Officer, I desire to continue to foster professional development, provide avenues for sharing success stories, and invite our member's knowledge and skills. Through these efforts, I aim to create an environment where every member feels empowered and informed to serve their communities effectively. As NEAFCS celebrates its milestone, may the ongoing efforts of NEAFCS and the opportunities continue to provide for collaboration, growth, and making a lasting impact on the lives of those we serve. Here is to the next 90 years.

