

Vermont

Voices from the Past – Present – Future

Christine Kniep, NEAFCS Historian and the 90th Anniversary Committee

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 on-going 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 a story from the Vermont Affiliate, featuring retiree Judy Branch. Vermont currently has no active members:

PAST:

Judy H Branch enjoyed 31 years applying the research of land grant universities while based at the University of Vermont. NEAFCS membership began during the first years as a County Home Demonstration Agent (1977) and continued through many position titles and roles until retiring in 2008 as Associate Professor with statewide responsibility for training Male and Female pairs to deliver in every county in VT a Family Court mandated program called, Helping Children Cope with Divorce.

NEAFCS was a constant social and academic support throughout my career in Extension. National meetings offered new friendships and different perspectives, as well as updating our knowledge base. A National meeting in San Antonio, TX since retiring and moving there, reminded me of the value of NEAFCS and how it has prepared me to continue to seek connection, social support and fact based practical information.

Currently Judy H Branch is Co-Chair of the Crossing Party Lines Board a national effort to teach skills for civil political discussions with people from differing beliefs and perspectives. <https://crossingpartylines.com/> Discussions offered nationally are Zoom based. Some areas have face to face discussion groups.

Hopefully NEAFCS will continue developing to meet the needs of professionals entering a career in Extension as well as the needs of those who have served for years.