

# The Crosby Arboretum

Mississippi State University Extension Service

Quarterly News Journal

Spring 2020

34.2

## MARGIE YATES JENKINS: FAREWELL TO A REGIONAL TREASURE

Louisiana plantswoman Mrs. Margie Jenkins passed away on January 29, 2020, at the age of 98. If you have plants in your garden purchased at a Crosby Arboretum native plant sale, and in particular native azaleas, mountain laurel, red star anise, bigleaf magnolia, or oakleaf hydrangea, the chances are pretty good you own plants that were touched by Margie's hands. "Ms. Margie" was an expert not only in growing plants, but also in making you feel like you were the only person alive when you arrived at Jenkins Farm and Nursery in Amite, Louisiana. She would whisk you off on her golf cart, treating you to stories about what she was propagating, the plants that were "coming on", where she had just visited or who she had been visiting with. More likely than not, you'd leave much later that day with a few unexpected plants, the result of her instructing you to "just take one of them, honey". Crosby Arboretum grounds manager Terry Johnson reminisced on the many lunches he had shared with Margie, daughter Margie Ann, and son Mark when he would pick up our plant orders. He recalled the time he found Margie bending over a 4" pot at the kitchen table with what looked to be hundreds of tiny oakleaf hydrangea sprouted from seed and picking them apart carefully with tweezers. Former Arboretum site director Bob Brzuszek also recounted: "It always felt like visiting family on Thanksgiving when I drove to Amite to get a truckload of plants from Jenkins Nursery. The first stop was in their office to share a cup of coffee with Bryant Jenkins while waiting for his wife Miss Margie to come in. Margie was a true force of nature, a hickory stick of a woman who could lug ten-gallon containers without effort. In her private collection garden, she would show her latest finds of rare plants given by friends. Margie Jenkins was instrumental in the early Crosby days because she had one of the few regional native plant nurseries that could supply plants. Many of the trees planted along the



Pond Journey came from Jenkins Nursery, often donated at no cost. Margie loved native plants and walking in her woods near the Little Tchefuncte River. It is incalculable the impact that Miss Margie has had on green industry professionals and communities across the Gulf Coast, and her legacy ranks with the greats of our region including Caroline Dormon, Tom Dodd Jr., Elizabeth Lawrence, and J.C. Raulston." Crosby's first director, Ed Blake, Jr., knew Margie through Robert Poore, a student of his at Mississippi State University. After our Piney Woods Pond was constructed, Robert and Ed traveled to Louisiana in 1987 to buy plants from Ms. Margie. He credits her with showing him how to appreciate our native species. Margie and Ed knew the potential value of Crosby as a public garden that would be displaying the region's native species. Ed recorded an oral history of his memories of Margie in a 2014 LSU thesis by Gayna B. Veltman, "A Louisiana Plantswoman: Margie Yates Jenkins". The recording is at the T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History, LSU Libraries. His stories about Margie are delightful, and I can hear Ed saying: "Margie's accomplishments stem from her attitude that is like a child's wonder, every day is like Christmas, and every day she loves life and the beauty and all the things on this earth."

- Patricia Drackett, Director, The Crosby Arboretum



In November 2019, a group of Pearl River County Master Gardeners and Arboretum volunteers traveled to the LNLA/LSU Louisiana Plant Materials Conference at the LSU AgCenter Hammond Research Station to hear Mrs. Margie Jenkins speak about azaleas and other plant delights.

Donations in Margie's memory may be made to the Margie Y. Jenkins Azalea Garden at LSU AgCenter's Hammond Research Station, established in 2006 to honor, share and teach about the contributions Ms. Margie made to the nursery and landscape industry. Make checks payable to the LSU AgCenter and write "Margie Jenkins" in the memo field. Mail to 21549 Old Covington Hwy, Hammond, LA 70403. Donations may also be made to the Louisiana Nursery and Landscape Foundation for Scholarship and Research, check to LNLFSR; note "Margie Y. Jenkins Scholarship Fund". Mail to LNLFSR, PO Box 1447, Mandeville, LA 70470.



## The Crosby Arboretum Mississippi State University

A regional arboretum representing the native flora of the Pearl River Drainage Basin in Mississippi and Louisiana.

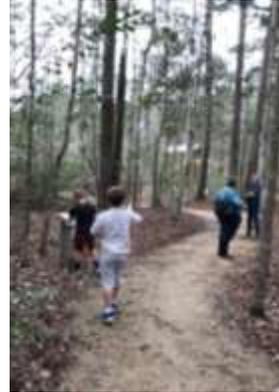
Picayune, Mississippi, USA

### Director's Notebook:

Thanks to the social media talents of Nickie Smith, the Crosby Arboretum recently surpassed 6,000 Facebook likes, over 2,000 more than in March 2019. What's the big deal, you may wonder? Well, it greatly helps in getting the word out quickly about upcoming programs and events. Last year, the Arboretum conducted a total of 78 programs and events that served a total of 3,779 persons, a significant increase over the 66 programs and events in 2018 serving 2,711 persons. Memberships have continued to rise. At the end of 2019, we had 455 members. Visitation last year was up as well, at 8,168, up from the 2018 visitation of 6,536 persons. Sherri Lowe's methods of tracking visitors has greatly helped to capture data. But, you can, too! Please remember to check in at the office when you visit! We count everyone! Our volunteers contributed approximately 1,000 hours last year, represented a labor value of 24,000. Many community groups also contributed additional labor toward Crosby projects. We are excited about our spring programs and events, the near completion of construction for the Rosen Pavilion located at the Gum Pond, and the March 10 opening of the UnBuilt Crosby Arboretum exhibit in Washington, D.C. If you are in the D.C. area, be sure to check it out!

- Patricia Drackett, Director

*The Crosby Arboretum, MSU Extension Service*



Visitors enjoyed a January walk along the 700 foot Swamp Forest Trail, and reading the many new interpretive signs.

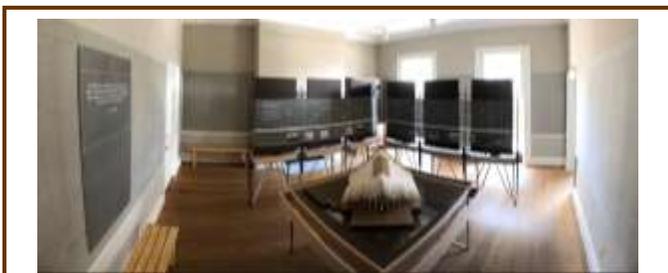
### Nickie Smith: Update on Crosby Arboretum Programs and Events



We're knocking off the winter chill and getting ready for spring!! Our event and program calendars are loaded with something for everyone, even people that aren't great with plants (I'm talking about me). Of course, our Spring Native Plant Sale is always highly anticipated by everyone,

and this year is no exception. We've also added programs to our schedule that are made for those of us that are lacking that green thumb. We hosted a successful vegetable container gardening program with Dr. Eddie Smith, Pearl River County Coordinator and Extension Agent, attended by more than forty persons on Friday, March 6. Our program calendar contains an outstanding selection of topics for the spring quarter, and we plan on continuing to offer more programs that focus on bringing those persons who are not as close as they'd like to be to nature a little closer. 😊 As we continue through the spring, I'd like to hear more about what you would like to see and learn about at the Arboretum. I'm working to expand on current events and bring in new ones and your input is vital! Remember, you can come visit us, even when there isn't a program or event. The trails are great for walks, runs, dog walks (we are pet friendly) and there are so many picturesque places for a photo shoot or just to sit down and have a picnic. We welcome you to come see us!

- Nickie Smith, Event & Marketing Coordinator  
*The Crosby Arboretum, MSU Extension Service*



**The UnBuilt Crosby Arboretum: An Unrealized Masterplan by E. Fay Jones and Edward Blake Jr.**  
**The Octagon Museum of the Architects Foundation**  
**March 10-July 31, 2020**

1735 New York Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20006  
<https://www.caad.msstate.edu/exhibitions/2019/unbuilt-arboretum-exhibition> (Follow for exhibit overview)



## The Crosby Arboretum Mississippi State University

A regional arboretum representing the native flora of the Pearl River Drainage Basin in Mississippi and Louisiana.

Picayune, Mississippi, USA

## Thank you, 2019 Annual Appeal Contributors!

The Crosby Arboretum wishes to express our sincere gratitude, and to acknowledge the persons who made contributions to our 2019 year-end Annual Appeal. This year's annual appeal letter was included in your winter quarterly news journal, which resulted in a considerable savings on mailing costs.

A total of \$6,347 was raised for the purpose of continuing to implement our site Master Plan designed by Ed Blake, Jr. by constructing the western pathway around the "panhandle" portion of the Gum Pond, and to install interpretive signage. We are sincerely thankful for your enthusiastic response this year!

**Capt. Cornelius and Loretta Acheson**  
Theresa Anoskey  
Ivan and Mary Biernacki  
Phelan and Fay Bright  
Bruce Campbell and Ann Steinmetz  
Ruth Cook  
Charles Cox  
Osmond and Debbi Crosby  
Jo Ann Fleming

**Doug and Phyllis Goodwin**  
Mason and Janet Gordon  
John and Laurie Gwaltney  
Lamar and Jennifer Heffner  
William and Natalie Locke  
Jack and Sue McGuire  
Dennis and Mary Martin  
Robert and Cynthia Murchison  
Kenneth Newburger

**Gordon and Laura Ousset**  
Julia O'Neal  
Sibyl Ramsey  
Chris Schneidau and Judy Schwartz  
Sharon Swope  
William Thames  
Melinda Tucker  
Tony and Sue Wilder  
Gene Yeager

## THE ROSEN PAVILION AT THE GUM POND EDUCATIONAL EXHIBIT



Over the past winter, construction took place on the Rosen Pavilion, a structure reflecting the image of Pinecote Pavilion on the Gum Pond's eastern shore, designed by Robert Poore of Native Habitats, Inc. who was involved in the early conceptual design of the Crosby Arboretum with first director Ed Blake, Jr. The simple pavilion is much smaller in size than Pinecote Pavilion, just large enough to contain a few benches for seating, creating an intimate space at the water's edge. This structure is a representation of a black gum dominated hummock, with the pavilion nested in among the trunks. Columns reach up out of the water, as trees will reach for sunlight, forming an understory canopy comprised of beams and a broad thin roof. The pavilion was a donation to the Arboretum from the Rosen family, in memory of former Foundation board member Yvette Rosen. Yvette's husband John and daughter Anne (right) enjoyed a visit in February to view the construction progress. Once the project area has been regraded and the adjacent trail rebuilt and connected to the pavilion, visitors will have the opportunity to rest on the pavilion's benches and contemplate the view across the pond. The Gum Pond Exhibit is only a short stroll north from our Visitor Center along the Swamp Forest Trail.

## PLANT PROFILE: *Cliftonia monophylla*



*Cliftonia* is a large evergreen shrub that is commonly known as **buckwheat tree** because of its seed clusters resembling buckwheat seed. You can find this glossy-leaved plant growing in full sun at Hillside Bog Natural Area (R) or towering over your head in the understory along the shady pathway near our Cypress Cove deck on the Arboretum's Pond Journey. This native shrub grows to 15' or more, and prefers moist, acidic soils, making it a good choice for wet areas in your home landscape. Although it blooms a bit less abundantly in shade, it is still gorgeous when in bloom. Color variations will occur, and a popular pink selection is 'Chipola Pink'. State botanist Heather Sullivan has reported she once came across a colony of *Cliftonia* in Stone County that was such a deep pink, it almost appeared to be maroon!

## GUM POND EXHIBIT IRIS DONATION



Sally Lebourgeois (L) and Carmen Ulfers (R) planted several hundred giant blue Iris (*Iris giganteaerulea*) in December at the Gum Pond in December, donated by the **Greater New Orleans Iris Society**. The organization collects wild Louisiana species iris and prepares them for donation through planting projects, though the generosity of their volunteers like Sally, increasing locations for the public to learn about these beautiful native perennials.

The News Journal is a quarterly publication of The Crosby Arboretum, Mississippi State University Extension Service. A subscription is included with an Arboretum membership. Journal may be received electronically.

**Please send correspondence to:** Patricia Drackett, Editor  
The Crosby Arboretum, P.O. Box 1639, Picayune, MS 39466  
pat.drackett@msstate.edu

*Mississippi State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, or veteran status.*

## Membership Application

All contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed. For more information call: (601) 799-2311 or print form online.

|       |                                   |          |
|-------|-----------------------------------|----------|
| _____ | Student (send copy of student ID) | \$ 20.00 |
| _____ | Individual                        | 35.00    |
| _____ | Individual/Senior                 | 30.00    |
| _____ | Family                            | 45.00    |
| _____ | Donor                             | 100.00   |
| _____ | Patron                            | 250.00   |
| _____ | Benefactor                        | 1,000.00 |
| _____ | Sweetgum                          | 100.00   |
| _____ | Sassafras                         | 250.00   |
| _____ | Live Oak                          | 500.00   |
| _____ | Bigleaf Magnolia                  | 1,000.00 |

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Renewing?  Memberships are for one year.



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION

## The Crosby Arboretum

Mississippi State University  
P.O. Box 1639  
Picayune, MS 39466-1639