



2019

HAM & EGG

 LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST &
 GEORGIA AGRICULTURAL SHOWCASE



FRIDAY, APRIL 5, 2019 | 8 A.M.
 FORT VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY | C. W. PETTIGREW FARM & COMMUNITY LIFE CENTER
 1005 STATE UNIVERSITY DRIVE | FORT VALLEY, GA 31030





Fort Valley State University

A State and Land-Grant University
University System of Georgia

Office of the President

1005 State University Drive • Fort Valley, GA 31030-4313

April 5, 2019

Dear Friends:

Fort Valley State University is proud to continue its historic legacy as a center of dialogue and discovery in the areas of agriculture and innovation. The Ham and Egg Breakfast is an important continuation of this important tradition. We are pleased to welcome policymakers, educators, agriculture industry professionals, and other citizens to our campus for a robust dialogue.

Agriculture and its related fields of endeavor, including sustainability, biotechnology, food science and animal science, are among the most consequential on the planet. Not only are these areas basic for our survival today, but our contemporary actions in these areas will have consequences lasting millennia. It is critical that we soberly focus on the challenges which exist in balancing our societal needs with our commercial goals, and at the same time, take full advantage of opportunities to position the state of Georgia and America as the world's leader in both agriculture and innovation.

Though agriculture is one of the world's oldest fields, we also see it as one of the future's most dynamic areas for growth and creativity. Fort Valley State University is proud to use our educational resources to be a national leader in the exploration of ways we can produce more with less effort, make more productive use of farm land, safeguard crops and livestock from disease, and produce healthier provisions and food. Moreover, we fully recognize the extraordinary potential the agriculture field has to give rise to disease cures, lead technological invention, and even solve the world's needs for electrical power. We see agriculture and education as the keys to humanity's prosperity, and FVSU continues to work to be a bridge between the two.

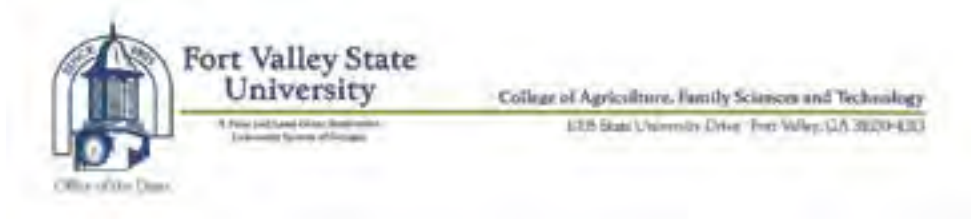
Thank you for joining us as we make advances in this critical field, and work together to empower the thought leaders, service providers, and producers who will move humanity forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Jones".

Paul Jones, Ph.D.

President



April 5, 2019

Dear 2019 Ham and Egg Legislative Breakfast Participants,

It is my privilege to welcome you to the 37th annual Ham and Egg Legislative Breakfast and Georgia Agricultural Showcase! Thank you for being a part of a longstanding tradition that started more than 103 years ago with the first Ham and Egg Show being held on Feb. 2, 1916, at Fort Valley State University.

This event allows us to continue to honor the contributions of Mr. Otis Samuel O'Neal and Mrs. Margaret Louise Toomer, who are known as the "Mother and Father of the Ham and Egg Show." This historic event not only positions the institution at center stage, but it also highlights the vital role of Fort Valley and Peach County. Over time, this breakfast has evolved into the opportunity to connect state leaders and agriculture leaders with our constituents. As you will hear today, the state has challenges, but we have exceptional opportunities when we join forces to provide solutions for the good of the people of Georgia.

In the College of Agriculture, Family Sciences and Technology at Fort Valley State University, we work to foster innovation and education and to prepare the next generation of workers in Georgia's largest industry. Agriculture contributes as much as \$75 billion to the state economy each year and is a major source of employment in the state. Our educational mission to support, serve and prepare our constituents to be productive members of Georgia's workforce extends nationally and internationally. When we come together with a common purpose, we can achieve this mission!

I hope that today we individually and collectively find new ways to make a difference in Georgia. Also, please enjoy the event and the collaboration that such times allow between friends and colleagues.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Daniel Blankenship".

Daniel Blankenship, Ph.D.
Interim Dean

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An Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action Institution



**Fort Valley State
University**

A State and Land-Grant University
University System of Georgia

**Office of Extension Administrator and
Director of Land-Grant Affairs**

C.W. Ferrigrew Farm and Community Life Center - Room 256
P.O. Box 4061 - Fort Valley, Georgia 31030-4061

April 5, 2019

Good morning,

The 2019 Ham and Egg Legislative Breakfast and Georgia Agricultural Showcase which you are enjoying this morning is an outgrowth of the Ham and Egg Show started at Fort Valley State College (University) 103 years ago by Mr. Otis Samuel O'Neal.

The first show in 1916 featured 27 hams and 17 dozen eggs. By 1966, the show's golden anniversary celebration included a banquet, auction, open house and presentations by city and state officials.

Fort Valley's Ham and Egg Show received - and deserved - a recognition that extended far beyond middle Georgia. By the 1940s, stories about the show's activities, highlighted in the press, made its fame national.

In 1982, the Cooperative Extension Program revived the tradition with the first Ham and Egg Breakfast. Our first event was simple - a hearty breakfast and a historical slide show. Since then, we have continued to look for ways to increase our service and benefit our clientele.

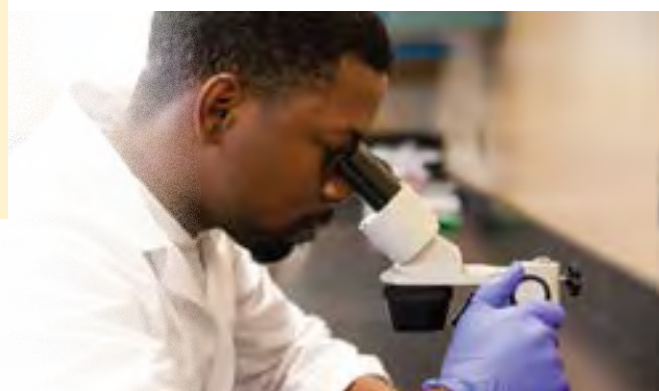
On behalf of Fort Valley State University's College of Agriculture, Family Sciences and Technology and the Cooperative Extension Program, welcome to the 37th annual Ham and Egg Breakfast!

Best regards,

Mark Latimore Jr., Ph.D.
Extension Administrator and
Director of Land-Grant Affairs








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An Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action Institution

The College of Agriculture, Family Sciences and Technology at Fort Valley State University provides students with a gateway to Georgia's multi-billion-dollar agricultural industry. FVSU students gain experience by participating in cutting-edge research led by world-renowned scientists. With rapidly growing career opportunities in the field of agriculture, the time is now to become an engineer, research scientist, teacher, veterinary technician or dietician. The possibilities are endless with a degree from FVSU College of Agriculture.




Majors offered by FVSU College of Agriculture, Family Sciences and Technology

UNDERGRADUATE:

-  Agricultural Economics
-  Agricultural Engineering Technology
-  Agricultural Teacher Education *(Vocational 1)*
-  Animal Science
-  Electronic Engineering Technology ²
-  Family & Consumer Sciences ³
-  Food Science
-  Plant Science
-  Veterinary Technology

GRADUATE:

-  Animal Science
-  Biotechnology
-  Public Health ⁵

PROGRAM ACCREDITED BY:

1 NCATE: National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education

2 ABET: Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology

3 AAFCS: American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences

4 AVMA: American Veterinary Medical Association

5 EHAC: National Environmental Health Science & Protection Accreditation Council

Your future is ahead...
Ag Takes You There!

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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Our Honored Guests



U.S. SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE SONNY PERDUE

The Honorable Sonny Perdue came by his knowledge of agriculture the old fashioned way: he was born into a farming family in Bonaire, Georgia. From childhood, and through his life in business and elected office, Perdue has experienced the industry from every possible perspective. Under Secretary Perdue, the U.S. Department of Agriculture is facts-based and data-driven, with a decision-making mindset that is customer-focused. As the former governor of Georgia, he is a strong believer in good government who will seek solutions to problems and not lament that the agency might be faced with difficult challenges. His four guiding principles are clear: to maximize the ability of American agriculture to create jobs, sell foods and fiber, and feed and clothe the world; to prioritize customer service for the taxpayers; to ensure that our food supply is safe and secure; and to maintain good stewardship of the natural resources that provide us with our miraculous bounty. Understanding that we live in a global economy where trade is of top importance, Secretary Perdue has pledged to be an unapologetic advocate for American agriculture.



U.S. REPRESENTATIVE SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

U.S. Representative Sanford D. Bishop, Jr. is serving his fourteenth term in the U.S. House of Representatives, representing Middle and Southwest Georgia's Second Congressional District. A leader among the fiscally responsible Democrats in Congress, Congressman Bishop has served on the House Committee on Appropriations since 2003. The top Democrat on the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee, Congressman Bishop also serves as the Co-Chair of the Congressional Military Family Caucus.

Bishop graduated from Morehouse College in 1968 and from Emory University Law School in 1971. He is an Eagle Scout, a 33rd Degree Mason (PHA), a Shriner, a Life Member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, and a deacon and trustee of the Mount Zion Baptist Church of Albany. He served in the U.S. Army, completed basic training at Fort Benning, Georgia, entered Advanced Reserve Officers Training, and received an Honorable Discharge in 1971.



U.S. SENATOR DAVID PERDUE

The Honorable David Perdue is the junior United States Senator from Georgia. Senator Perdue is the only former Fortune 500 CEO in Congress. He has over 40 years of business experience as the former CEO of Reebok athletic brand and Dollar General stores, where he created thousands of quality jobs and helped working families make it from payday to payday.

Senator Perdue was born in Macon, Georgia, and raised in Warner Robins, Georgia where he grew up working on his family farm. Both of his parents were school teachers, and from an early age he was taught the importance of hard work and a good education.

Senator Perdue earned a bachelor's degree in industrial engineering and a master's degree in operations research at Georgia Institute of Technology while working warehouse and construction jobs.

Prior to his decisive election to the U.S. Senate in 2014, Senator Perdue had never held public office. He was inspired to shake up Washington and change the direction of our country. The senator is a champion for term limits for politicians, reining in out-of-control spending, growing the economy, and tackling our nation's debt crisis.

Senator Perdue sits on the powerful Senate Armed Services, Banking, Budget, and Agriculture Committees and is a member of the Bipartisan Historically Black Colleges and Universities Caucus.

Senator Perdue and his wife, Bonnie, reside in Glynn County, Georgia. They have two sons and three grandsons, who are their inspiration for public service.



GA STATE SENATOR JOHN F. KENNEDY

Senator John F. Kennedy was first elected to the Georgia State Senate in 2014 to represent Crawford, Monroe, Peach, and Upson counties as well as portions of Bibb and Houston counties. Senator Kennedy is currently the Majority Caucus chairman and a member of the Judiciary, Appropriations, Banking and Financial Institutions, Regulated Industries, Rules, and Reapportionment Committees. Sen. Kennedy earned a degree in economics from Mercer University in 1987. He completed his law degree at Mercer University School of Law in 1990. He is an attorney practicing with (and past managing partner) of the Macon-based law firm of James-Bates-Brannan-Groover, LLP, specializing in commercial litigation, business transactions, business law, and fiduciary law. Senator Kennedy currently serves on the executive board of directors for the Central Georgia Council of the Boy Scouts of America. He previously served as the president of the Macon Bar Association and is currently a member of the Board of Governors for the State Bar of Georgia. He is also a graduate of Leadership Georgia.



GA STATE REPRESENTATIVE PATTY BENTLEY

Patty Bentley began her career of public service while working as chief registrar for the Taylor County Board of Elections in 1996. In 2004, she was the first black woman elected to serve on the Taylor County Board of Commissioners. She announced her candidacy for Georgia House District 139 on September 26th, 2011. In a run-off election on August 21, 2012, she won her bid to represent Taylor, Macon, and Dooly Counties and the south portion of Peach County in the Georgia Legislature. She is the first woman elected to this position for this district of the state.

As a member of the Georgia House of Representatives she serves on the following committees: House Agriculture Committee, Higher Education, Intragovernmental Coordination Committee, State Retirement Committee, Rural Development Council, the Rural Caucus, Women Caucus, and the Working Families Caucus. She also serves as a representative on the Council for Agriculture, Research, Extension, and Teaching for the Fort Valley State University College of Agriculture, Family Sciences, and Technology and on the Fort Valley State University Foundation Board of Trustees.

During the 2019 General Assembly session, Speaker David Ralston, appointed Rep. Bentley as vice-chair of the Sales Tax Sub-Committee on Ways and Means and to the Special Committee on Access to Health Care.

June 6 will mark the 10-year wedding anniversary for Representative Bentley and her husband, Darryl. They are a blended family of five children and two grandsons. Rep. Bentley is a member of the New Pilgrim Missionary Baptist Church in Macon, under the leadership of Pastor Bryant Wardell Raines.



GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE DIRECTOR OF POLICY BO WARREN

Bo Warren serves as the director of policy for the Georgia Department of Agriculture. In this role, he coordinates legislative and regulatory activities between the department and local, state and federal governmental officials.

In 2013, Warren was appointed by Governor Nathan Deal to serve as director of Georgia's Center of Innovation for Agribusiness. This center operates as one of six Centers of Innovation under Georgia's Department of Economic Development, which offer technical industry expertise, collaborative research and partnership assistance to help industry members connect, compete and grow globally.

While serving in that role, Warren also managed business development operations for the Georgia Department of Agriculture. In this capacity, he was responsible for helping to generate economic development opportunities in support of Georgia's \$74 billion agricultural industry.

Prior to working with the Department of Agriculture, he served for fourteen years as government affairs coordinator in varying corporate and trade capacities both in Georgia and Washington, DC, including the Monsanto Company, CropLife America, Southern Crop Production Association, and the Georgia Farm Bureau Federation.

Warren earned an associate degree in agriculture from Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, a bachelor's degree in agriBusiness from the University of Georgia and a master's degree in business administration from Mercer University.

He, his wife Amarie and daughters Ellis and Betsy, live in Monroe, Georgia.

Agenda

PRESIDING

U.S. Representative Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.

Breakfast served at 7:30 a.m.

PRESENTATION OF COLORS

FVSU ROTC Color Guard

NATIONAL ANTHEM

FVSU Concert Choir

INVOCATION

Deion Mapp
FVSU Food & Nutrition Major (Class of 2020)

PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

Dr. Paul Jones
President

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FAMILY SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

Dr. Daniel Blankenship
*Interim Dean, FVSU College of Agriculture,
Family Sciences and Technology*

LEGISLATIVE SESSION UPDATE

GA State Senator John F. Kennedy
Georgia State Senate (District 18)
GA State Representative Patty J. Bentley
Georgia House of Representatives (District 139)

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE UPDATE

Bo Warren
Director of Policy, Georgia Department of Agriculture

CONGRESSIONAL REMARKS & INTRODUCTION OF KEYNOTE SPEAKER

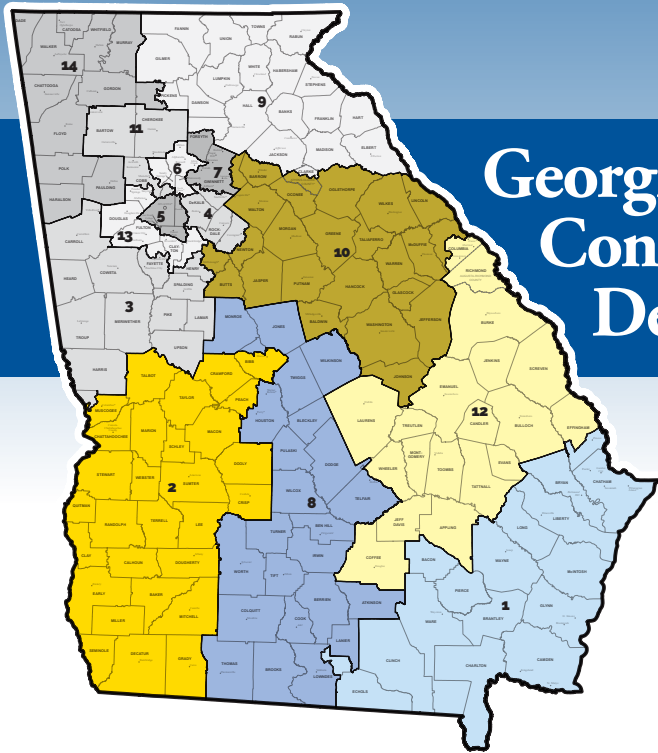
U.S. Senator David Perdue
U.S. Senate (Ga.)

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
U.S. Secretary of Agriculture

CLOSING REMARKS

Dr. Mark Latimore, Jr.
Extension Administrator, FVSU Cooperative Extension Program



Georgia's U.S. Congressional Delegation



SEN. JOHN "JOHNNY" ISAKSON
SENIOR SENATOR



SEN. DAVID PERDUE
JUNIOR SENATOR



REP. BUDDY CARTER
1ST DISTRICT



REP. SANFORD BISHOP, JR.
2ND DISTRICT



REP. DREW FERGUSON IV
3RD DISTRICT



REP. HENRY "HANK" JOHNSON, JR.
4TH DISTRICT



REP. JOHN LEWIS
5TH DISTRICT



REP. LUCY MCBATH
6TH DISTRICT



REP. ROB WOODALL
7TH DISTRICT



REP. AUSTIN SCOTT
8TH DISTRICT



REP. DOUG COLLINS
9TH DISTRICT



REP. JODY HICE
10TH DISTRICT



REP. BARRY LOUDERMILK
11TH DISTRICT



REP. RICK ALLEN
12TH DISTRICT



REP. DAVID SCOTT
13TH DISTRICT



REP. TOM GRAVES
14TH DISTRICT

Fort Valley State University Alumni Serving in Georgia's Legislature

CLASS
of
1970



Representative Calvin Smyre
DISTRICT 135

Serving 45 years

State Representative Calvin Smyre, business executive, state legislator, community and national leader, earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Fort Valley State University in 1970, in business administration with a minor in accounting. He holds an honorary doctorate degree from Morehouse School of Medicine.

His career path has taken him from being a community organizer and director of the "War on Poverty" program in Columbus to his current position as executive vice president for corporate external affairs at Synovus Financial Corp. (Retired - December 2014)

Elected at the age of 27, he is now the "dean" of the Georgia General Assembly. As a 45-year legislative veteran, he serves on the most important panels of the House, Appropriations, Rules and Higher Education Committees. He is a former chairman of the Rules and Higher Education Committees, the House Democratic Caucus and the Democratic Party of Georgia.

Rep. Smyre has a distinguished legislative record which includes authoring the legislation making Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday a state holiday and legislation creating a statue of Dr. King on the state capitol grounds. He was also instrumental and co-sponsored the historic legislation creating a new Georgia State Flag as well as the HOPE Scholarship Program and authored legislation creating the Georgia Dome, former home of the Atlanta Falcons.

Nationally, he is president emeritus of the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) and a past president of the NBCSL Foundation.

CLASS
of
1972



Senator Freddie Powell Sims
DISTRICT 12

Serving 14 years

State Senator Freddie Powell Sims, a Democrat from Albany, Georgia was elected to the State Senate in 2008 to represent the 12th Senatorial District.

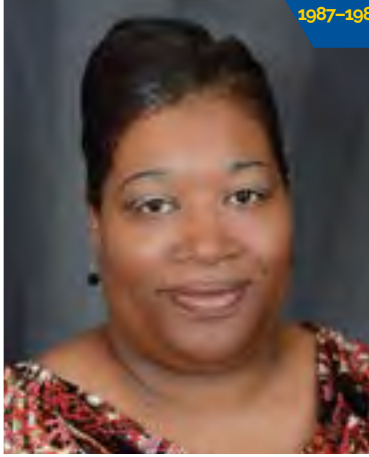
Senator Sims serves as secretary of the Education and Youth Committee, vice chair of the Interstate Cooperation Committee and is a member of the Appropriations and Natural Resources and the Environment Committees. She also serves on several Appropriations Subcommittees including Agriculture, Education and Natural Resources.

Although this is her second legislative role, her community, civic and professional involvement has been extensive. Senator Sims has been an active member of Kiwanis International, the Fort Valley State University Foundation Board of Trustees, Children in Poverty and several other organizations and served as a deputy registrar for Dougherty County. Her involvement has earned her numerous awards and certificates, including the 2004 Outstanding Financial Contributions to Capital Campaign Award for Fort Valley State University and the 2008 Outstanding Legislator of the Year Award for technical and adult education.

Senator Sims decided to get into politics because of her desire to serve the public; more specifically, to provide a voice for those citizens who do not seem to have one. She is a retired middle school principal and has earned a doctorate degree in educational leadership. Dr. Sims is a devout Baptist. Senator Sims is married to Norman Sims. The couple shares 3 daughters.

The 12th Senatorial District includes all of Baker, Calhoun, Clay, Dougherty, Randolph, Stewart, Terrell, Quitman and Webster Counties as well as portions of Mitchell and Sumter Counties.

ATTENDED
1987-1989



Representative Valencia Stovall
DISTRICT 74

Serving 7 years

State Representative Valencia Stovall was first elected in 2012 to represent the citizens of District 74 including portions of the cities of Morrow, Lake City, Forest Park, Riverdale, and College Park in Clayton County. The native of Atlanta and mother of two has a strong diverse background in finance, entrepreneurship, advocacy, and public policy. She is also a local business owner. She currently serves in the House as vice chair of the Committee on Education Subcommittee on Academic Achievement, and as a member of the Education Appropriations, Small Business Development, Economic Development and Tourism, and Interstate Cooperation Committees. She served as vice-chair of the Medical Cannabis Working Group, chair of the Study Committee on the Revitalization of the Atlanta State Farmers Market, on the Joint Study Committee on Establishment of a Leadership Academy, on the special Education Sub-committee on School Redesign, as a member of the Georgia Literacy Commission and Georgia Council For The Arts (appointed by Governor Deal), a member of Clayton State University Dean of Arts & Science Advisory Council, co-chair of United Way THRIVE Clayton, and a member of local PTAs. Rep. Stovall recently received the highest national appointment in her political career, an appointment by the Georgia House Speaker as a member of the National Council of State Legislatures Education Standing Committee. She is a former commissioner on the Georgia Education Reform Commission-Early Learning (appointed by Governor Deal), a member of the 1st Georgia Early Childcare Quality Rated Advisory Board, a board member for the Atlanta Council of PTA's, served on multiple school councils, is a former charter school board chair and advisory member.

In 2018, Rep. Stovall authored her second bill signed into law, House Resolution 279, which designates Single Parent Day as March 21st every year in Georgia. In 2016, as a second term legislator, Rep. Stovall authored House Bill 614, the Landon Dunson Act, which was signed into law and allows video cameras to be placed in the self contained classrooms of special needs students in any public schools. The State of Georgia is the 2nd state to pass video camera legislation. She has authored and co-sponsored other legislation to improve the lives of Georgians, many of which have been signed into law.

Rep. Stovall is a 2015 Council of State Governments Henry Toll Fellow and was recognized in 2016 by the National Council of State Legislatures as a "Woman In Politics Making A Difference." In 2016, Rep. Stovall hosted the inaugural Educate Georgia Summit, which brought state officials, educators, parents, students and business and community leaders to the Georgia State Capitol for two days to dive into education policy and build the future of education in Georgia. Since its inception 1,000 people have attended. She also hosts several annual community events including a career job fair which has drawn over 1,000 job seekers since it's inception in 2013 and the Dance on the Bridge Celebration, where she has recognized over 1,000 parent and community volunteers. She has earned respect for standing firm on her beliefs, even when it's unpopular. She strives to do her part in making Clayton County and the State of Georgia the best places to live, work and play. She remains focused on "The Buck (economic redevelopment), The Book (education reform), The Ballot (voter empowerment)".

CLASS
of
1987



Representative Brian Prince
DISTRICT 127

Serving 6 years

State Representative Brian Prince serves the citizens of House District (HD) 127, comprised of constituents living in Richmond and Jefferson Counties. Representative Prince currently serves as secretary of the Defense and Veteran's Affairs Committee and as a member of the Motor Vehicles, Transportation, Special Rules and Appropriations (General Government) Committees.

Representative Prince is a retired United States Army signal officer and now works as chief operations officer for Brock's Driver Education School Inc. in Augusta.

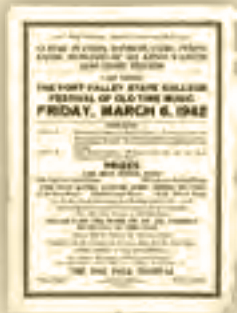
Representative Prince received a Bachelor of Science degree in zoology from Fort Valley State University and a Master of Science degree in administration from Central Michigan University.

Representative Prince is married to the former Lori P. Head of Griffin, Georgia and has four children (Lauren, Phillip, Lydia and Leah).

The Fort Valley Ham & Egg Show

During the principalship of Henry Alexander Hunt (1904-1938) at the Fort Valley High and Industrial School (FVHIS) 101 years ago, Otis Samuel O’Neal started the proud tradition of the Ham & Egg Show. O’Neal initially worked with his wife at the time, Jennie, the Houston County home demonstration agent, on the event, which first took place on February 2, 1916, on the FVHIS campus. The initial show featured 27 “poorly trimmed, ragged hams, shoulders, and sides, and 17 dozen dirty mixed eggs,” and had low attendance. However the event soon grew, and within a few years, the Ham and Egg Show was drawing thousands to the Fort Valley campus. The death of O’Neal’s wife led to the hiring of a new home demonstration agent, Margaret Toomer, who became O’Neal’s longtime partner in the show and known as “Mother of Egg.” As the show evolved, and largely thanks to Toomer, a 4-H celebration was added to incorporate youth, allowing them an opportunity to display their talents through oratorical contests, plays, and musical performances.

During the presidency of Horace Mann Bond (1939-1945), the Folk Music Festival was added which brought to Middle Georgia the best folk and gospel musicians—blues pioneer W.C. Handy was a regular attendee—as well as story tellers. The United States government recognized that the Folk Music Festival represented the best in African-American folk art and sent representatives down to record performances. The success of Fort Valley’s Ham and Egg Show led other states, including Alabama, Arkansas, and North Carolina, to duplicate it. The program drew national attention when it was featured in *Life Magazine* in 1943 and on the CBS radio program *Country Journal* in 1945, and it remained a mainstay on the Fort Valley campus until it ceased operating in 1966. The centennial celebration of this groundbreaking agricultural event must be noted because it taught rural African-American farmers how to properly cure pigs, addressed how to get more and better eggs from their laying hens, and demonstrated the latest methods of safely preserving locally grown fruits and vegetables. Fortunately, the legacy of the Ham and Egg Show is still evident at the Lowndes County Ham and Egg Show, which takes place every February.



OTIS SAMUEL O’NEAL

Otis Samuel O’Neal was born on November 20, 1884 in Upson County, Georgia and was the fifth of 17 children. His parents, Mr. and Mrs. Jasper O’Neal, were born in slavery. In 1902, he entered Fort Valley High and Industrial School, and graduated in 1908. He later attended Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. George Washington Carver, his professor at Tuskegee, became his inspiration and O’Neal brought Carver’s ideas and techniques back to his alma mater.



On November 6, 1914, O’Neal became the Negro county agent for Houston County and later Peach County when it was created in 1924. O’Neal taught the farmers to diversify their crops rather than depend on cotton alone. He found idle land which tenant farmers could buy and arranged loans for them. He organized his territory into communities with a “key farmer” as leader of each.

In 1937, he was offered a full professorship at Tuskegee Institute; however, he declined the opportunity. He later would become a professor at Fort Valley State College. Due to his contributions to the agricultural profession, O’Neal received the Superior Service Award for Distinguished Service in Agriculture from U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Charles F. Brannan in 1949. When he retired in 1951, over 1,000 pieces of pork – 600 hams, 300 shoulders, 100 sides of bacon, 200 quarts of canned pork and 100 pounds of sausage – and 200 dozen eggs decorated the Founder’s Hall auditorium at the thirty-sixth show. He died in September 1957, survived by his wife Mrs. Addie Perdue O’Neal. Today, he is still known as the “Father of the Ham & Egg Show.”

MARGARET LOUISE TOOMER



Margaret Louise Jordan Toomer, a native of Fort Valley, was born on December 20, 1894. Toomer attended Fort Valley High and Industrial School. Upon graduation in 1915, Toomer attended Morris Brown College in Atlanta for one year before transferring to Tuskegee Institute in Alabama to complete her baccalaureate degree. In 1922, Toomer returned to Georgia and

began her career as a teacher, becoming a home demonstration agent in 1926.

As the home demonstration agent for Peach and Houston Counties, Toomer provided chicks and helped raise them to be layers (not to mention fryers) that won prizes at the Ham and Egg Show. By 1948, Toomer's last year of involvement, the number of eggs shown had doubled to 300 dozen. Toomer also taught the way to can safely so that families could save produce for the lean winter months, expanding and developing a tradition at Fort Valley High and Industrial School. By the early 1930's, farmers describing their successful efforts to provide adequately for their families year-round were a regular part of the Ham and Egg Shows. Additionally, while food remained central, Toomer's influence can be seen from the inclusion of subjects like nutrition, syphilis, tuberculosis hookworms, and homemaking.

After broadening the shows to include domestic life, in those days largely the province of wives, Toomer also began to include young people to help ensure that the next generation of rural Middle Georgians got off on the right foot. She arranged for farm wives to make presentations about improvements in their lives, and starting in 1929, for 4-H Club members to demonstrate agricultural achievements and later to compete in essay and oratorical contests.

Toomer worked the shows for more than twenty years as a home demonstration agent; however, after two decades, illness pushed her to decrease her load until her retirement in January 1950. Ms. Toomer died in May 1972. Today, Margaret Toomer is still known as the "Mother of the Ham & Egg Show."

ROBERT T. CHURCH, SR.

Robert Thomas Church, Sr., was born in Athens, Georgia, on September 26, 1909. Since his father was a sharecropper, Church learned how to plow a field, pick cotton, cut hay, and raise hogs. He attended elementary and junior high school in Athens before earning an undergraduate degree at Hampton Institute in Virginia in 1934.



After his return to Georgia, Church worked as a high school agriculture teacher and assistant principal in Wilkes County. In 1937, he relocated to Jenkins County to become principal and agriculture teacher, where he also met his wife, Ruby Summers. To that union Robert T. Church, Jr. and Ruby Annette Church were born.

Church became familiar with the Fort Valley Ham and Egg Show through his agricultural work; having heard how outstanding the program was. He initially held his own Ham and Egg Shows in Jenkins and Clarke Counties and, when selected to become the extension agent in Peach County in 1938, he began assisting with the Fort Valley show. In 1949 he was selected to lead it. Church used the Ham and Egg show to raise issues not only about product quality, but also about social policies; he wanted African American 4-H members to have the same opportunities as white ones, and he fought for equal pay for African-American extension agents.

Church led the show until it ceased in 1966, and he retired from extension work in 1969. After his retirement, Church continued to help the community by serving on the Fort Valley City Council from 1974-1982, working with the Department of Family and Children Services, assisting African-American farmers in obtaining loans, and donating scholarship funds to Fort Valley State. Robert T. Church died in December 2008 at the age of 99.

JOHN W. SAUNDERS



In 1950, John W. Saunders and the Black Farm Bureau established the first Ham and Egg Show and Sale in Lowndes County. Saunders was the first African-American county extension agent appointed in Lowndes County. He retired in 1975 and died in 1987. Sanders was instrumental in the development of the agricultural and human resources in the region. In 2005, the City of Valdosta invested \$1.5M in special purpose local option sales tax funds to renovate and rename the City's Barber Park in his honor. Today, Lowndes County is the last county holding an annual Ham and Egg show.

Sources: Dr. Dawn Herd-Clark, Dr. Fred van Hartesveldt, Joy Moten-Thomas, Kymara Sneed, and Kenneth Wilkerson. Photos courtesy of Hunt Memorial Public Library.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

GA State Senator John F. Kennedy, Georgia Senate District 18
GA State Representative Patty Bentley, Georgia House District 139
GA State Representative Robert Dickey, Georgia House District 140
Greg Ziesenhene, Office of U.S. Senator David Perdue
Shavonda Hill, Office of U.S. Representative Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Elizabeth Kringer, Office of U.S. Representative Sanford D. Bishop Jr.
Slayten Carter, Office of U.S. Representative Austin Scott
Marquinta Gonzalez, Fort Valley State University
R.J. Mathis, Fort Valley State University
Joy Moten-Thomas, Fort Valley State University
Marc Thomas, Fort Valley State University
Kena Torbert, Fort Valley State University



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