MARTIN, Tenn. – The American Society of Agronomy (ASA), Crop Science Society of America (CSSA) and Soil Science Society of America (SSSA) announced Austin G. Scott from the University of Tennessee at Martin has been named a Golden Opportunity Scholar. Scott is the third scholar from UT Martin.

Scott, who is from Hickory Valley in Hardeman County, will be presented his award Nov. 3-6 during the scientific societies’ annual meeting in Tampa, Fla. Scott is looking forward to meeting with his mentor in Tampa.

“This is a great deal and a wonderful opportunity for me,” Scott said.

He will also compete in an oral symposium with a project he completed recently while working with DuPont. After he completes his undergraduate degree in May at UT Martin, he plans to enroll in graduate school at UT Knoxville.

“Once I graduate I will go to work on a research project in Jackson and then go to graduate school in August,” Scott said.

That research project is the simulated corn earworm on the yield of the corn crop.

The Golden Opportunity Scholars Institute is a program of the American Society of Agronomy, Crop Science Society of America and the Soil Science Society of America that matches undergraduates with scientist-mentors during the ASA, CSSA and SSSA annual meetings.

Former UT Martin students Lindsey Slaughter and Whitney Crow were also named Golden Opportunity Scholars. In all, 92 students have been named Golden Opportunity Scholars. UT Martin has had three students or 3 percent of the scholars.

“This is a distinct honor for Austin and UT Martin that he has been selected,” UT Martin's Dr. Paula Gale said.

UTM also has two past Golden Opportunity Scholars, Whitney Crowe and Lindsey Slaughter.
Dr. Rachna Tewari

Dr. Rachna Tewari joins UTM from Nainital, India. She earned her undergraduate degree in Agriculture and an MBA in Agricultural Business, in India. She worked at a corporate bank for a little while before moving to the United States in 2009.

She has a MS in Agricultural Business and Economics from West Texas A&M University and a Ph.D. in Agriculture and Applied Economics from Texas Tech.

UTM is her first teaching position and she is currently teaching courses in farm management, agricultural statistics, agricultural market planning, and international food and fiber. She also assists intern students.

Dr. Tewari liked the department and the university when she visited here. She says the students are friendly and get along with faculty, which is a major positive. She also likes that the department is friendly and helpful.

Dr. Jessica Hill

CAAS is pleased to be Dr. Jessica Hill’s first teaching experience. Hill is from Luverne, Alabama. She earned an Animal Science degree from Auburn University, where she also completed her masters in Agricultural Economics. Hill earned her Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics from Louisiana State University.

Hill did not grow up with an agricultural background, but found an interest in her high school agricultural class. She volunteered at a local vet clinic and discovered she enjoyed the marketing side of agriculture.

She said it was the department that drew her to UTM. She says the department is large but has the small feeling.

“The faculty is great. I can ask advice from anyone and everyone is so friendly,” she says. She also adds that the students are very respectful and she likes that the school as a whole is engrained in the community. Hill is currently teaching courses in Agriculture Marketing, Introduction to Agricultural Sales, and Introduction to Agricultural Business.
Dietetic student writes article

Heart Health: Simple changes to a great start

By: Riley Auvenshine

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in both men and women. It is also preventable. By making certain lifestyle changes, the risk of having heart disease can significantly be reduced. Taking a good look at your diet and making a few simple changes is a great place to begin getting heart healthy.

A diet high in sodium contributes to high blood pressure, a risk factor for heart disease. Reducing or removing sodium from the diet can lower blood pressure.

One way to do this is to select low sodium products, or even better, products with no sodium added when grocery shopping. Another way to reduce your sodium intake is to prepare more meals at home. Since processed foods and foods prepared in restaurants are typically high in sodium, cooking can greatly reduce the amount of sodium you consume. Try seasoning with herbs and spices instead of salt. High cholesterol is another major risk factor for heart disease.

A high cholesterol diet can lead to arteries being clogged and eventually, a heart attack. Foods high in cholesterol include red meat, whole eggs and full fat dairy products. If watching your cholesterol intake, try selecting fish instead of red meat, substituting two egg whites for each whole egg, and choosing low-fat dairy products in place of full fat dairy products.

All fats are not created equal. When it comes to the types of fats in your diet, some are good for your heart, while others are bad. Saturated fats and trans fats are both bad for you and have a negative impact on your heart health. Both will actually raise blood cholesterol levels.

Examples of foods high in saturated fat are high fat cuts of meat, as well as dairy products like whole milk and butter. To lower saturated fat intake, choose leaner cuts of meat, low-fat or fat-free milk and a margarine spread instead of butter.

Trans fats should be completely removed from the diet, it is very bad for you. Fried foods like fries and chicken, as well as potato chips and snack foods, are high in trans fat. Good fats that benefit your heart include monounsaturated fats, polyunsaturated fats and omega-3 fatty acids.

Monounsaturated fats and polyunsaturated fats can lower blood cholesterol levels. Sources include avocados, almonds, peanut butter, olive and sunflower oil.

Polyunsaturated fats are found in corn oil, sunflower seeds and soymilk. Omega-3 fatty acids are a group of polyunsaturated fats, are really good for the heart and offer benefits like lowering blood pressure and decreasing the risk of abnormal heartbeats.

Fatty fishes, like salmon and tuna, are great sources of omega-3. Flaxseed, walnuts and soybean oil are other foods providing omega-3 fatty acids. Something to add to your diet to benefit your heart health is soluble fiber.

A high soluble fiber intake can block cholesterol absorption. This will lower your blood cholesterol levels, which means it ultimately lowers your risk of heart disease. Foods with soluble fiber include oatmeal, beans, nuts, apples, bananas and oranges.

Making these changes in your diet, along with exercising regularly and managing your weight and stress, can reduce your risk for having heart disease. It is important to remember that even though we only celebrate American Heart Month in February, taking care of your heart has to happen year round.
By: Jesi Ogg

Even though he is retired, Dr. Byford turned his passion for wildlife and the outdoors into a lifelong career.

Jim Byford grew up the son of a sharecropper in Trenton, TN. But not only was his father a sharecropper, he was also a carpenter, repaired small engines, and worked at the cotton mill.

His family eventually bought a small farm of their own which consisted of corn, cotton, and truck crops. It was the truck crops that helped Byford pay his way through school. He peddled sweet potatoes in the communities between Trenton and Nashville to help fund his education.

Byford earned a B.S. in general agriculture from UTM. He bypassed a masters degree and earned a Ph.D. in wildlife with a minor in fisheries and forestry from Auburn University.

Byford served as the University of Georgia state Extension Specialist from 1969 to 1972. There was an interest in catfish farming and, while there, he helped farmers start their own catfish farms.

In 1972, Byford moved to Tennessee and served as Extension Wildlife Specialist for the University of Tennessee. This time, Byford’s job was to demonstrate to farmers how to bring small game, such as quail, to their farms. He was also given the task of starting a statewide 4-H wildlife program.

In 1987, Byford made the move to Martin, where he would retire in 2010. During his time at UTM, he served as Dean of the College of Agriculture and Home Economics. He also taught courses in wildlife.

Dr. Byford still remains busy in retirement; he serves on several boards and committees. He is a member of Land Between the Lakes advisory committee, he is secretary/treasurer for Weakley County Hunters for the Hungry, Service Project Chairman for Martin Rotary Club, he serves on the Advisory Board for Tennessee Wildlife Federation, and he is a member of the First United Methodist Church choir member.

He is a founding board member of the ethanol plant in Obion County and he is also involved in the planning and building of a new 4-H and conference center in West Tennessee.

Dr. Byford also conducts Campfire Programs across the country. These programs involve group singing, storytelling, and skits. They are team building activities tailored to youth and leaders of youth, such as 4-H and FFA.

He still hunts, fishes and enjoys the outdoors during his spare time. He and his wife of 50 years, Daryl, have two children and six grandchildren that they enjoy spending time with.

Dr. Byford fondly remembers his time spent at UTM.

“UTM is one of the finest undergraduate institution I have ever seen. I don’t know of a finer one,” Byford says.

He says it has a family setting, where the faculty and staff care for each other, and the students pick up on that. One thing he is proud of is the physical appearance of the campus. He says that even in tough times, the campus still looks well taken care of; that reflects pride and pride attracts people.

“This campus means a lot to me and my family. It made me who I am,” says Byford.