

Founders of NCCESA

Edith Cline Herter and Frances Herman O'Neal were Extension Secretaries in Catawba County who were instrumental in the formation of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Secretaries Association. Frances was employed with Extension from February 1, 1963, to July 31, 1981, when she retired. Edith retired in September, 1975, after approximately five years employment with Extension.

During the middle of 1973, Edith Herter and Frances O'Neal conceived the idea of an Extension secretaries' association. They contacted other secretaries using their own financial resources and on their own time. On July 17, 1973, they sent a letter to all Extension secretaries in North Carolina asking if they would be interested in forming an organization. Spurred by the overwhelming positive response, organizational meetings were held in Newton, Catawba County, Southwestern District, and Asheville, West District, on Saturday, August 18, 1973.

The state organizational meeting was held on Saturday, November 10, at the Guilford County Agricultural Center in Greensboro. Frances was elected President and served the remainder of 1973 and 1974. Edith served as the first president of the Southwestern District.

The Herter-O'Neal Scholarship is named for Edith and Frances.

Excerpt from a copy of a letter from Edith to the SW District Secretaries dated November 12, 1973.

"Dear Extension Secretary:

This past Saturday, November 10, the Extension Secretaries held an all-day organizational meeting in Greensboro in Guilford County's beautiful Agriculture Center. Our hostess was Mrs. Faye Saunders assisted by Mrs. Rosanna Chesney and Ms. Jane Trogden, Guilford County Extension Secretaries. Mr. John Crawford, Guilford County Extension Chairman, "came early and stayed late" extending courtesies to everyone.

Dr. T. C. Blalock, Associate Director Extension Service, was with us for most of the day. He spoke during the morning on varied and vital subjects, giving us a broad scope of information concerning employees of the Extension Service. His lengthy question and answer period was most informative and the highlight of the day. This is what it's all about! Our purpose for organizing statewide is to boost the professionalism of County Extension Secretaries and be aware of our role as colleagues with a desire to improve our status, yet never forget to seek and welcome suggestions. Our organization was never intended to be used for, and never will be a gripe session.

At the end of the day it was gratifying to see how much had been accomplished. Our organization is to be known as, "North Carolina Association of Cooperative Extension Secretaries." The following officers were elected:

President: Frances O'Neal, Southwestern District
Vice President: Lottie Herring, South Central District
Secretary: Ernestine Talley, North Central District
Treasurer: Faye Saunders, Northwestern District

Our next state meeting will be held in Raleigh on Saturday, April 6, 1974 (tentative). Future state meetings will be held in a different district each year.

Edith C. Herter, President, Southwestern District
North Carolina Association of Cooperative Extension Secretaries (NCACES)"

On a Personal Note

News article that appeared in the July, 1992, State Newsletter; written by Miranda Pope

"November 8, 1991, is a milestone in the history of the NCCESA. On this date the campus group was born and Edith Cline Herter went to be with the Lord. Edith was one of the founders of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Secretaries Association and was very excited about the formation of a group on campus.

Edith was a lady who believed in causes and when she discovered the inequality of Extension secretarial positions across the State, she went to work. She helped instigate the establishment of the NCCESA in 1973 and served as the first president of the Southwestern District. Edith was proud of our association's accomplishments and supported us with her time and talents even after she retired in 1975.

If Edith wasn't at our district or state meetings, people would ask, "Where is she off to now?" Edith loved to travel and often visited her children on the West Coast or traveled with them.

Edith's loving spirit endeared her to those who knew her. Even though we miss her, Edith would want us to remember her with happiness and joy!"

Excerpt from **Catawba County Reporter**, August, 1978

Can a lady who has lived in such places as Dallas, Chicago, and Minneapolis find happiness in Newton? Frances O'Neal, Secretary in the Agricultural Extension Office, is such a lady and she says she is completely happy living and working here.

Frances, who has been working as Secretary to the Extension Chairman for the past 15 years, previously worked for Montgomery Ward as corresponding secretary to the Chairman of the Board and for Sear-Roebuck in the Collections Department. Working with such large national companies meant frequent transfers for Frances and her husband, Jerry. This was no problem for the couple since Jerry was a chef and finding work was not a hard task. Most importantly, both of them liked to travel.

Unfortunately, Jerry died in 1960 and Frances decided to return to her native surroundings in Catawba County. Both of her parents lived here and she felt the need to be close to them.

After working for several years in the office of a local furniture company, Frances went to work in the Extension Office. Frances's duties include typing for the agricultural agents, handling supplies for the office, preparing agricultural newsletters and answering the telephone. "A lot of my time is spent answering the phone," said Frances. "Many times I can answer the caller's questions - after all, when you have been around Extension agents for 15 years, you learn a lot about insects, diseases, planting and all

the other things associated with farming. Even though answering questions on the phone sometimes keeps me away from my filing and typing, I enjoy it. I have always liked to help anybody I can."

I will always remember these two special ladies and am privileged to have known and worked with them for several years. I'm sure the progress we have made as an Association would have pleased them greatly.

Written and compiled by:
Miranda Pope, Catawba County, Southwestern District