USDA Honors Two Lab Technicians

WASHINGTON — Two U.S. Department of Agriculture employees have received Outstanding Performance Awards for career advancement, made under the Operation MUST program (Maximum Utilization of Skills and Training).

They are Mrs. Wilma Ross and Mrs. Bernice Brooks, both laboratory technicians employed by USDA's Agricultural Research Service.

MUST program provides opportunities for career advancement through on-the-job training and self-development.

Outstanding Awards

Mrs. Ross, a Beltsville, Md. native, started as a helper in the food quality and use laboratory where her mother, Mrs. Clara Weems, worked for many years.

Today Mrs. Ross, winner of two outstanding performance awards, is part of a team selected to design methods for analyzing fats through automation.

She was recently chosen by the Division for training at Technician Institute to learn the dual channel automation system used in the Lipid Nutrition Laboratory, where she is a biological laboratory technician.

Her Mother

Mrs. Ross credits her achievements to her mother's guidance and training.

She particularly remembers one of her mother's sayings: "If you aren't part of the solution, you are part of the problem."

Forced to drop out of high school after two years, Mrs. Ross later studied for, and passed, the D.C. high school equivalency examination.

Night Classes

Following a course of study designed by her supervisor, Dr. Rosemary Morris, she attended night classes at the USDA Graduate School for several years.

In her work in the Lipid Nutrition Laboratory, Mrs. Ross is an expert at thin layer chromatography and gas liquid chromatography and has worked with radio active tracers.

Dr. Morris describes her as adaptable and versatile and able to do sophisticated things in the laboratory.

Done Properly

"She is efficient and smart. You can leave her with an assignment and know that it will be done properly," Dr. Morris said.

The other award winner, Mrs. Bernice Brooks, was described by Dr. C. E. Bodwell, her supervisor, in the protein nutrition laboratory, as being "extremely responsible, conscientious and dependable."

Mrs. Brooks, won advancement through her own efforts and "hard work," Dr. Bodwell said.

Mrs. Brooks, one of eight children and the mother of two, began her career with ARS in 1961 as a CPC-3 in the old clothing and household research division.

She was first assigned to the household equipment laboratory where she tested gas versus electric ovens, washers, and dryers.

When that work was discontinued, she moved to food quality and use laboratory where she tested and prepared meats and poultry.

Winning Promotion

In 1965 she received an outstanding performance award, winning a promotion to GS-5.

The food quality and use laboratory was abolished in 1968 and Mrs. Brooks moved to the protein nutrition laboratory as a technician. She was promoted to GS-7 in 1969.

Mrs. Brooks, who dropped out of high school at the end of the junior year, received a high school diploma from the American Correspondence School in 1963.

She also studied grammar and composition and completed courses in chemistry at the USDA Graduate School.

Dr. Bodwell describes Mrs. Brooks as an excellent worker who readily understands sophisticated procedures, thus freeing scientists in the laboratory for purely scientific research.

MRS. BERNICE BROOKS sets up an analytical gel electrophoresis apparatus for conducting animal muscle experiments.

MRS. WILMA ROSS determines free fatty acids in plasma by the micro-titrametric method.

Conservationist Like Everywhere

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Ernest L. Moody, 34, heads Washington D.C.'s first local office of the Soil Conservation Service, USDA.

Talented and energetic, District Conservationist Moody is a pioneer in the federal agency's efforts to help solve urban soil and water erosion problems.

With a staff of three professionals, Mr. Moody works with District of Columbia officials on their conservation and land and water management problems.

These include efforts to clean up the Potomac and Anacostia rivers and to control or prevent soil and water erosion problems on school grounds and other large areas through help in planning and developing new sites.

He enjoys working with students and teachers of 22 District of Columbia schools which have requested his help in conservation education work.

This may include such student "do-it-yourself" projects as planting grass and trees on the school ground, terracing sloping areas or digging small ponds for water control and beautification.

Mr. Moody joined the Soil Conservation Service eight years ago after receiving a BS in agronomy from Virginia State College, Petersburg, Va., and two years in the army.

He's worked in Carrol and Washington counties, Md. and moved into the new Washington D.C. District Conservationist slot in September 1971.

An avid table tennis player, he belongs to the Bible Way Church and provides piano accompaniment for its choir. His home is in Oxon Hill, Md.

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Postal Service Protects Consumer

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The U.S. Postal Service has been in the consumer protection field longer than any other federal agency, tracing its authority in this area from the initial version of the mail fraud statute (18 U.S.C., Sec. 1341) enacted in 1872.

The mail fraud statute defines as a criminal offense against the United States any use of the mails with intent to defraud.

Suspected violations of this law are investigated by the Postal Inspection Service.

Criminal Prosecution

Criminal prosecution is the responsibility of U.S. attorneys.

Violators of this law can be fined up to $1,000 or imprisoned as much as five years, or both, for each offense.

Another law (39 U.S.C., Sec. 3005) authorizes the Postal Service to issue — after according the mailer the right to a hearing — an order denying him the right to receive mailed remittances where he misrepresents his product or service.

Scheme Exists

Unlike the criminal mail fraud law, this civil statute does not require proof of intent of defraud.

It merely requires proof that a scheme exists to obtain money or property by mail through misrepresentation.

Again, the Postal Inspection Service investigates any suspected violations.

Receiving Evidence

Upon receiving evidence of any material misrepresentation of a product or service, the law department's consumer protection office either obtains from the promoter a "consent agreement" to voluntarily halt the practice or it files a civil-administrative complaint with the judicial officer of the Postal Service.

The latter procedure results in a formal administrative hearing before an independent hearing examiner. Such hearings are conducted in a manner similar to courtroom procedures, and are generally held in Washington.

The Postal Service has specific authority (39 U.S.C., Sec. 3007) to obtain from federal district courts orders preventing the promoter from receiving mail in response to such advertising, pending the conclusion of the administrative hearing.

Appropriate Cases

In appropriate cases all three statutes may be applied to halt the same scheme.

In less than a year, the Postal Service has reduced the time needed to process its cases under the civil statute.

Immediately after passage of the Postal Reorganization Act on July 1, 1971, 55 per cent of those cases had been pending more than six months. At present, only 18 per cent are that old.

As of June 30, 1972, only 2 per cent of the cases awaiting action under the civil statute had been in the office more than 18 months. After Reorganization, 39 per cent of the pending cases were that old.

EDUCATION WORK—Ernest Moody, SCS District Conservationist, helps students and teacher plant Scotch pine on a sloping area of the Mildred Green Elementary School grounds in Washington, D.C.

ERNEST MOODY, SCS District Conservationist, walks around the grounds of Mildred Green Elementary School in Washington, D.C., after helping students put wood chips on a nature trail.

—ESCU's

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school offerings.

The faculty-conference, which opened the 1972-73 academic year, saw the administration, faculty and staff take a close look at programs in Cooperative Education with the view toward establishing Co-Ops involving ECSU and participating business and industrial firms that will provide students with more practical and, in some instances, more financially rewarding experiences through better classroom instruction and on-the-job training

Thus, the Elizabeth City State University Foundation was created to solicit necessary private funds from alumni, corporations, foundations, individuals and organizations so that ECSU can provide a greater margin of excellence for students.

Greater state, federal private support can mean ECSU's graduates will be like "trees" standing by the "rivers" of career opportunities, bringing forth their "fruit in their season."

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