

EPSILON SIGMA PHI
Alpha Zeta Chapter – Texas

Southern Region Distinguished Service Award

Nominee's Name: Martha Couch, Ph.D.
Title: Associate Director - 4-H and Youth
Address: 7607 Eastmark Drive, Suite 101
City, State Zip: College Station, TX 77840
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Position and Dates of Extension Employment (*If applicable*):

5/97 to Present Texas Cooperative Extension (TCE), Texas A&M University System
Professor and Associate Director 4-H and Youth
9/94 to 4/97 Texas Cooperative Extension, Texas A&M University System
Professor and District Extension Director
7/75 to 8/94 Texas Cooperative Extension, Texas A&M University System
Professor and Extension 4-H Specialist
5/72 to 6/75 Texas Cooperative Extension, Texas A&M University System County
Extension Agent - Home Economics, Gaines County, Texas

Education: Ph.D. Home Economics Education, Texas Tech University, 1980
M.S. Family Studies, Texas Tech University, 1976
B.S. Home Economics Education, Texas Tech University, 1972

Outstanding Professional Accomplishments:

Texas Cooperative Extension Risk Management task force, administrative advisor, current
National 4-H Congress Design Team, committees and overall chair, 2000 to 2005
National Meeting of the State 4-H Leaders, planning committee, 2004 and 2005
National 4-H Leadership Trust member, 2000 to 2004
National 4-H Congress Board of Directors, 2002 to 2004
Texas Cooperative Extension Program Specialist Career Ladder task force, 2004
Southern Region State 4-H Leaders, chair, vice-chair and secretary, 1999 to 2002
Texas Cooperative Extension Superior Service Award for Administration, August 2002
Texas Tech College of Human Sciences Distinguished Alumni Award, March, 2001
Epsilon Sigma Phi Exemplary Leadership Award, August, 2001
Texas Cooperative Extension Superior Service Team Award, August, 2001
National Association of 4-H Agents, National Promote 4-H Award, November, 1998
National Association of 4-H Agents, 25 Years of Service Award, November, 1997
Texas Legislative Citation of Outstanding Service, September, 1997
Epsilon Sigma Phi, National Regional Distinguished Service Team Award, August, 1993
Texas Association of Extension 4-H Agents American Spirit Award, November, 1991
Epsilon Sigma Phi Distinguished Service Award, August, 1990
Texas Cooperative Extension Superior Service Award, January, 1990

Outstanding Programmatic Accomplishments:

- The number of 4-H members participating in the state youth program has increased to 1,000,000 per year involving 50,000 volunteers annually. Urban youth participation has increased dramatically due to some initiative programming by the 4-H staff. The programs meet the state curriculum requirement in several science areas and are being adopted by elementary and science teachers across the state.
- Texas 4-H Youth Foundation scholarships have grown from \$1,000,000 to \$1,900,000 during the last five years. Annually the following scholarships are awarded by the 4-H Foundation:
 - 4 San Antonio Livestock Exhibition @ \$15,000 each
 - 70 Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo @ \$12,000 each
 - 10 San Antonio Livestock Exhibition @ \$12,000 each
 - 71 Wallrath @ \$10,000 eachThe other scholarships range from \$1,500 to \$10,000
- Three years ago because of Texas Cooperative Extension's continuous efforts in behalf of youth, they were awarded the ownership of the Texas 4-H Conference Center at Brownwood, Texas. A full time staff keeps the facility operating year round. Annually at this facility, over 9,000 youth and adult leaders receive training in a wide range of programming areas. This in-depth training benefits youth and leaders across the state.
- Extension employee numbers have dropped over the last six years but 4-H has had impressive gains in its number of 4-H agents, from 20 to 86. The value of the programs conducted has been recognized by many organizations and grants to the program have increased to more than \$675,000 each year. Another important source of funding for the program is the state Legislature which has increased its funding for the last eight years.
- Martha only hires agents that have a masters degree and encourages all faculty to work on advanced degrees. She has had seven 4-H specialists complete their Ph.D.
- Youth Boards are being organized in each county in Texas. These boards consists of youth in leadership roles that identify plans of actions related to youth issues in the county.
- The Texas 4-H Research Review was launched as an active partner in a nationwide publication effort to share research articles related to 4-H and Youth Development.
- Texas actively participates in a nationwide project known as Operation Military Kids that provides educational opportunities to youth whose parent(s) are in the military.

Support Statement:

There is almost a shortage of adverbs to describe the work habits of Martha Couch. She has not hardly slowed down in her 30 plus years of working for Extension. With each change in career, Martha has set a new mark to be reached by the next person to follow her. She serves in the leadership role for 4-H in Texas and has been influential in its significant gains. She is very deserving of this ESP honor.